

## Loki's Oath

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## Loki's Oath

by [sincemorning](#)

### Summary

At the start of Thor: Ragnarok, Loki swears an oath to Thor that he will help find Odin. Little does Loki suspect that Thor will leave him at the mercy of the sadistic Stephen Strange and that Tony Stark will be his unlikely saviour.

Porn with a little plot, lots of hurt, gets quite dark, eventual fluff.

### Notes

I want to credit the amazing [Endlessstairway](#) whose fics inspired me to try and write something myself. This isn't linked to any particular work as I haven't intentionally tried to use any of her versions of the characters, but I can't rule out that some elements may have subconsciously crept in.

# Chapter 1

“I yield!” Loki gasped, as Mjölnir sped towards his face. “I swear to the Norns, I will aid you to recover Odin, however I can.”

Thor raised an eyebrow.

“However you tell you me to!” Loki added desperately.

Thor released his grip on Loki’s collar just in time for the hammer to thud into his open palm, rather than Loki’s skull. As he crumpled to the ground, Loki felt the weight of his oath settle, like a heavy blanket, the tendrils of magic wrapping themselves around his skin, binding him to his promise.

He cursed himself under his breath. What a promise to make! In these long months of sitting around impersonating Odin, he had clearly gone soft. It had all happened so fast, one moment he was enjoying watching yet another rendition of his heroic exploits, the next he was pinned in his brother’s powerful grasp, Mjölnir hurtling towards him. The Loki of old would never have made such a foolish oath. He had been the master of twisting words, of giving himself a loophole. Well, he would have to work extra hard to get himself out of this particular trap of his own creation.

Getting to his feet and straightening his clothes he set his face with a look of grim determination. As little as he was looking forward to the Allfather’s return, the sooner they brought him back to Asgard, the sooner he would be free of his foolish oath.

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Almost immediately after Thor and Loki landed in New York, a swirling circle of light appeared around Loki’s feet, spiriting him away and leaving in his place a mysterious calling card. Thor followed the directions on the card to 177A Bleaker Street and pushed open the door to see a cloaked figure hanging in the air, as if waiting for him. Landing with a theatrical flourish, the tall figure spoke.

“Thor Odinson, the god of Thunder. My name is Dr Stephen Strange and I have some questions for you.”

All at once Thor found himself sitting, in a completely different room, which looked to be a library. The wizard continued like nothing unusual had happened.

“I understand you’re looking for Odin?”

Thor’s eyes narrowed. This Midgardian magician seemed to know entirely too much about his business for comfort.

“Unfortunately,” Stephen continued, “I have already been looking for Odin for some weeks and he is proving elusive. I believe he wants to remain here in exile, and, as a rule, when gods don’t want to be found it is tricky to find them, even for me.”

Thor took a deep draft from a flagon that had appeared in his hand. “You expect me to believe that you knew Odin was on Midgard weeks ago? Before I had even discovered that my cursed brother had transported him here and taken up his place in the Asgardian court. How could you know such a thing?”

Stephen smiled a wry smile. Smug, Thor thought.

“I know many things before they come to general knowledge, especially where they concern interfering busybody deities who think the Earth is their playground to exile each other to and throw things at each other on. So let’s just say if I can’t find Odin with the tools in my possession your impressive grasp of the finer arts of brute force and bulging biceps is unlikely to get you very far. However, your arrival may be of service. Your blood is likely the missing ingredient to find our way to Odin.”

“My blood?” grunted Thor, slightly alarmed. He preferred to keep his blood in his body, where possible.

“Don’t be concerned, just a little of it will be required.” Then sighing, as if embarrassed to go on, “the spell will use your blood to find a route to Odin. But given that he doesn’t want to be found, you will need to prove yourself worthy. In essence, it will set off a quest for you to follow. It’s not the kind of spell I prefer, in fact its inefficient, sentimental drivel, but there we are. The quest will have its share of obstacles, but I don’t doubt your ability to complete it.”

“A quest?” groaned Thor. “These are not glad tidings while Asgard remains without a leader. Can the spell not lead us straight to Odin?”

Stephen shook his head curtly. “If it were possible, I would do it. I have no desire for you foolish gods to be running amok endangering this world with your frivolous antics for any longer than is absolutely necessary. And it is essential that we locate Odin as fast as possible. I’m sure it hasn’t escaped your notice that a grave threat hangs over all the realms. It remains to be seen whether Odin has enough strength left to countermand it, but he must be found, he must try!”

Thor considered briefly.

“Very well,” he sighed. “If this is what must be done, return Loki and we will be on our way to complete this quest.”

It was Stephen’s turn to narrow his eyes.

“I think not. It’s one thing having you running around with your ham-fisted hammering, but it’s quite another giving his highness the merchant of malice free reign.”

“It’s mischief, he’s the god of mischief.”

“Is he? I don’t see much mischief in his actions on this realm. I see a penchant for destruction and a tiresome bully who manipulates others to serve the will of enemies far greater than his own puny understanding. Loki will remain here with me. It is my hope that Odin’s return will restore the balance among the realms, but I must plan for the worst. There is a defence I have been wishing to develop, which requires a rather unusual approach, including the co-operation of another magic user of some power. I have no such power on Earth at this time. Loki will remain here and assist me until the defence is complete and Odin found. This is the only offer I will make.”

Thor sighed. He didn’t trust this sorcerer. The look in Strange’s eyes when he said “unusual” was not reassuring. Thor didn’t think that whatever he wanted Loki to do for him was going to be overly pleasant. But, at this point, he didn’t particularly care. His brother had proved time and again that he could take care of himself and had certainly got out of worse scrapes. Thor still simmered with an undercurrent of anger and hurt that Loki had allowed him to believe he was dead and casually usurped his father to live off the fat of Asgard while Thor himself had mourned him as he journeyed the nine realms, fighting to bring them to peace.

“Aye,” Thor nodded, after only a moment’s consideration.

“Then it’s done,” said Stephen, pulling a small dagger from the air.

Thor offered his hand and Stephen sliced a fine line across his palm, then clasped the hand to his own. A handshake in blood. A portal opened through which Thor saw an open expanse of grass and the edge of a cliff overlooking the ocean. At the same time, a second portal opened parallel to the floor and the distant, but rapidly closing, yell of his brother could be clearly heard, as if falling from a great height.

Moments later, Loki crashed to the wooden floor board with a resounding thud.

“I have been falling,” he shouted, irate, “for 30 minutes!”

Thor looked somewhat sheepishly at the splayed out figure at his feet.

“You can handle him from here.” He nodded to Strange.

“Handle me!” raged Loki. “Who are you? You think you’re some kind of sorcerer? Don’t think for one minute you second rate...”

“Please be quiet, I’ll be with you in a moment” said Strange, cool as ice.

Loki’s eyes flared. Pulling himself to his feet he threw out his arms, plucking daggers from the air beside him.

“I think perhaps not,” said Strange, the daggers vanishing just as quickly as they had come.

In their place a silver chain wrapped itself around Loki’s left wrist, all the way around his back, pulling in his right wrist then looping back to carry his feet out from under him and suspend him horizontal in the air, legs and arms bound.

Thor looked apologetic.

“I’m sorry, brother, it’s not for long. Assist this physician until his defence for this realm is completed, do whatever he asks of you, and no trickery. I will be back with Odin presently and we will return to Asgard and sort out this mess you’ve made. Farewell, brother.”

The force of Thor’s instruction hitting the enchantment Loki had placed around himself felt like a gut punch, taking his breath away. Before he could react further than to gawp at Thor incredulous, Thor stepped through the portal, which twisted and swirled to a close behind him.

Strange turned to Loki, his face serious, but a disturbing sparkle in his eye at the sight of the god bound up before him.

Loki exhaled, realising he had been holding his breath through sheer anger.

“What is happening here? How are you, a simple Midgardian illusionist, holding me here like some trussed up hog? I command you to let me down this instant!”

Stephen smirked a little.

“Very well,” he said, and Loki landed with a thump on the sofa.

Loki took in everything slowly, the slicked back hair with floppy fringe, the smart narrow moustache and beard, the form fitting blue robes and the cape that seemed to shift gently, even

though he was sitting still. Loki noticed most particularly the golden amulet strung around his neck. He could feel an ominous, pulsing power emulating from it, unmistakably an infinity stone.

Loki was no fool. He still didn't expect this trickster to really offer him any challenge, but he wasn't going to be careless around the wielders of infinity stones.

The stranger seemed to be waiting for him to break the silence. Alright.

"I am Loki of Asgard," Loki began, authoritatively. "I demand you identify yourself immediately and I will decide what fate befits someone who treats a prince of Asgard with such indignity, then be on my way."

The stranger's face didn't visibly change, but Loki got the distinct impression he was being laughed at.

"My greetings, Loki of Asgard. I am Doctor Stephen Strange, master of the mystic arts, Sorcerer Supreme, defender of the New York sanctum and of Earth. I'm afraid I'm in charge of the fates around here. While you were falling through the void of the mirror dimension your brother and I made a bargain. I gave him a spell to find Odin and in return he gave me you, to assist me in any manner necessary to protect this world, until he gets back."

"That's absurd!" Loki spluttered. "I won't stand for some jumped-up court jester claiming to instruct the rightful king of Asgard and Jotunheim. Bring Thor back this instant and we will undo this frivolous bargain."

"No can do your majesty," said Strange. He was definitely smiling now. An almost devilish grin. "We shook on the spell in blood and Thor won't be back until his quest is complete."

Loki scowled.

"Fool though my brother is, I must admit he has much experience and success in "quests" as you so romantically put it. Doubtless he will be back presently and perhaps you can be of some interest to me while he is gone. I have not met a Midgardian magic user and, though the powers here are far inferior to those of the other realms, I would appreciate a demonstration of their limited capabilities before I deal with your insolence."

Stephen dropped all pretence of cool and laughed aloud.

"I don't think you understand, oh mighty one. Thor's quest will continue until the defences you will help me build for the Earth are complete, and during that time he has granted me, with his own blood, your complete obedience, your full compliance, for whatever I need, or want you to do."

Loki's jaw dropped. He made to stand, but he couldn't. As soon as he tried, he found himself back on the sofa. He leaned forward to stare straight into Strange's eyes.

"You may have been able to fool that bumbling oaf into believing he needed to go on a "quest", which is clearly of your own concoction, to find the Allfather, but I assure you, your flimsy magic cannot compel me to do anything I don't want to do. Perhaps by these parlour tricks you can keep me on this sofa engaging you in witty repartee, but that will be the end of the matter. I shall not be doing anything further for you."

Strange's eyes sparkled. "But you haven't heard what it is yet that I want you do. Your reputation in certain matters precedes you. I've heard rumours and I wonder if it might even be something to your liking."

Stephen leaned forward now too, bringing his face within a few inches of Loki's.

"Continue." Loki commanded, his voice lowered.

"I've seen what's coming and it's not good. Odin's power weakens and I do not know if he can protect all the realms. I am trying to perfect a defence for Earth. I have found a very ancient spell book that suggests a way to create a powerful shield. There are two ways the book suggests that such a shield can come into being. One is by the creator gaining dominion over another mage of significant magical power, the source magician, by annihilating them. Don't worry, we won't be doing that, to create the shield in such a manner would require drawing upon the power of the dark dimension. I didn't make many friends there last time and I'd prefer not visit again. The second way is for the creator to gain dominion through quite another route, and one which I find, well, let's say, more to my personal tastes, and I believe yours. The spell is tricky to translate, but I think the meaning is clear."

Loki responded at once, voice still low. "You expect me to build a shield for this pathetic world? I must admit having some fun at your expense in the process may bring me some satisfaction. You hear rightly, I am not opposed to such games on occasion. It is a right of the powerful men of Asgard to, let's say, enjoy the company of lesser men when the fancy takes them, following conquests on the battlefield for example. You are not unappealing, but I think I would rather not exert myself for this endeavour. I tired of Midgard after my last visit, but I might again wish to add it to the realms that are rightfully mine. Although I do not doubt I could wipe away your trivial magic at a moment's notice, adding my own to your defences may cause me more trouble."

Stephen shook his head slowly and ran his tongue over his bottom lip. Loki was annoyed to realise he found this rather distracting.

"Oh no, your majesty, you are missing two rather key features of my scheme. First of all, I will be the one gaining dominion. Second of all, your good brother has instructed to you assist me and I can tell from the enchantments that are woven around you that leaves you with entirely no choice."

Loki looked shell-shocked. He opened his mouth to speak but Stephen interrupted.

"I don't see how anything further is served by frivolous chatter. I must prepare for the rituals to start. The spells are unspecific, there will undoubtedly be several attempts required, and a process of experimentation. Sleep now. All your strength, both magical and otherwise, will be required. We start in the morning."

And with that Loki found himself laying alone in dimly lit, windowless room. An odd sleepy feeling starting to wash over him. Stay awake, he thought to himself, forcing his eyes open. As soon as the thought crossed his mind, his skin began to tingle. As he struggled to keep the wave of sleep from crashing over him, the tingle grew more intense, his skin shaking with heat. Holding his hands up, the flesh writhed before his eyes, blistering and red raw, the pain searing through him. On the edge of passing out, with a gasp he let go of his resistance. The agony abated immediately. His eyes fell shut and everything faded to black.

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When Loki woke he quickly realised he was completely naked. No longer lying on the bed, he was kneeling on a cold, smooth surface, hands bound behind him, head hanging backwards. Lifting his head, he saw he was in the centre of an intricately drawn circle of runes. Remembering back to the blistering pain of trying to resist Strange's order to fall asleep, he scanned his skin, but there was no trace of the magical punishment.

“Good morning, sleepy head,” said Strange, not looking up from the book he was studying. “I thought I’d get started, I didn’t see the need to wake you for this part.”

Loki, still somewhat disorientated, made to stand. That’s when he realised that the same silver cord that had bound him before was wrapped securely around his ankles, binding his feet together and linking up to his hands, tied at the wrist. A simple restraint, but effective. From this position, without the aid of magic, or a helping hand with a strong pair of scissors, there was no way he could get up.

“Now look here!”

“Shh, shh,” chided Strange. “I know you like to be the centre of attention, but we’ll get to that. I just have a couple more runes to cast. Do what I tell you, don’t use any magic unless I ask you to.”

The commands laid thick onto Loki, stifling him. Strange waived his hands and two rows of indecipherable text appeared in the air, then floated down forming a circle around the runes already outlined on the floor. The text glowed a very faint amber.

“Yes, yes, very nice,” whispered Strange, soothingly. “That’s it, now we get started.”

Despite himself, Loki felt a shiver run down his spine at the thought of Strange’s intense gaze on his naked body. He looked down, hastily averting his eyes from the magician’s piercing stare.

“Don’t fight it,” said Strange softly, another order rushing to embrace Loki. “One way or another this is happening, I suggest you relax and enjoy, if you can.”

A suggestion, rather than an order, Loki thought. And a good thing too. Depending on what happened next, requiring Loki to “enjoy” it may have been the type of impossible task that would really test the consequences of disobeying his oath.

Strange began to pace the inside of the circle, never taking his eyes off Loki. Then, crouching down, he ran his hands along the backs of Loki’s arms, coming to rest on Loki’s own bound wrists.

Keeping one hand on Loki’s wrists, he brought the other arm around the front of Loki’s body. His fingers sliding slowly up Loki’s porcelain-white stomach to his chest, then feeling gently along his collarbone. Loki could feel warm breath on the back of his neck, as gentle as the fingers, which slowly slid up to rest on Loki’s throat.

Strange’s hands were shaking slightly. Was he nervous? That would make two of them, Loki thought. He didn’t sense that Strange wanted to hurt him, but he was also confident that the sorcerer would do whatever he thought necessary, whether Loki liked it or not.

A hand reached up to sweep aside Loki’s hair and he felt lips press into back of his neck, kissing him, almost tenderly. Strange’s strong arm pulled him in closer. The hand on his throat pressed more firmly, drawing Loki in, a sense of urgency, of desire, of control. Loki’s breath quickened. He felt Strange’s kisses turn to teeth, sinking into the cool flesh of his neck.

On top of the physical sensations, Loki felt powerful tendrils of this sorcerer’s magic swirl and grip around his own. The incompatible magics of Yggdrasil and Midgard embraced each other, exploring, testing each others’ limits. The amulet encasing the pulsing power of the infinity stone pressed into Loki’s back.

Loki felt exposed, at the mercy of the touches, the kisses, the powerful magic. It was an intoxicating combination.

He closed his eyes, breathing deeply and trying to quiet the fluttering in his stomach that was rapidly spreading southwards. He wasn't allowed to fight it physically, but that didn't mean he had to accept he was finding this arousing.

It had been some time since a man had touched him like this. His long period manifesting as Odin had not been without its pleasures, but the type of activities he could indulge in without blowing his cover had been more limited than his usual preferences. It had been fair maiden after fair maiden.

Loki's mind wandered unbidden back to times he had played out situations just like this in his head. Being held in the grip of a powerful warrior. Being pinned down, a warm body above him, heavy muscles and rough hands – be they Asgardian, Jotun, or sometimes even the hands of a certain Midgardian hero. He had often had these fantasies, but in practice, he had always dismissed such urges. He was a prince of Asgard. He was the powerful one, the commander to whom others bent their wills, and their bodies. While he might not be as physically strong as all of the Asgardian warriors he had taken, he had the power of his magic and their unyielding loyalty and service to his desires.

Strange broke Loki out of his daydream by pushing him forward roughly. No longer a bare floor in front of him, Loki's body landed on a soft cushion. His hands and feet were still bound, but the magic silver chain lengthened enough that he could fall forward, bent over at the waist. Loki's pulse quickened. He felt the chain wrap around his back, down under the cushion he was lying on and back around again and again, securing him firmly in position, as if that was required given Strange's order not to fight. Perhaps for the sorcerer's own enjoyment then.

For the first time since he had awoken, Loki began to feel real fear cutting through the nervous arousal. This was getting very real, very fast. A wave of panic washed over him and instinct took over, his magic automatically trying to whisk him away. A blinding pain immediately erupted across his skin. He halted the magic coursing through his veins and the burning stopped as quickly as it had started, but his writhing hadn't escaped Strange's notice.

“So that's what happens when you try and disobey me. Very interesting. Quite the little masochist aren't you, considering you placed this spell on yourself.”

Loki cursed Strange under his breath. But he was more frustrated at himself. Strange was right, he had brought this on himself with his foolish promise to Thor and careless use of magic.

Loki felt the weight of Strange's body press against him. From what Loki could tell, Strange was still fully clothed, but he felt a tell tale hardness press into the back of his leg. Loki hadn't heard of Midgardian men having particular prowess in this regard, but size of the bulge sliding against him did nothing to alleviate his fear.

Strange's hands were on him again now. Skimming down his back, his exposed ass. A wet finger found its target and slid into place making Loki's eyes spring open as he took a gasping breath. The other hand nestled under his balls, fingers settling around the base of his cock, squeezing ever so slightly. Loki noticed for the first time that he too was rock hard, his cock pressing into the soft pillows, Strange's hand containing him, rather than providing stimulation.

Strange's finger probed and swirled and was joined by a second. Loki shuddered at the foreign sensations, the feeling of stretching, but also the feeling of being utterly at the mercy of someone else. He didn't bother to protest. He knew it was pointless.

He became vaguely aware of the runes around him taking on a brighter hue. The spell must be working. But the thought only lasted a moment. The fingers withdrew from his ass and from his

cock simultaneously. He let slip an involuntary whine at the loss of sensation and cursed himself for it when he heard the ghost of a laugh from Strange. But he wasn't left wanting for long.

With a rustling of robes, the thick head of Strange's cock pressed against his entrance. Loki held his breath. Even as a prisoner in Odin's dungeons, even when his consciousness was warped and twisted by the mind stone, he had never felt so vulnerable. So utterly defenceless, laid out before this mortal who wielded so much power over him, so much control.

He gritted his teeth as Strange slid forward. The sensation was overwhelming. He didn't know whether to moan or cry. He didn't even know if it hurt. It was too much to process, but he wasn't given time to adjust. Strange ploughed on until he was fully embedded, pressed up against Loki's back, hands on his shoulders, holding him down on the pillows.

Achingly slowly Strange began to withdraw, before driving himself home again, firmly, determinedly. Loki whimpered. The feeling of being stretched out, spread, for the pleasure of another, while his treacherous rock hard cock cried out to be touched, filled him with shame.

Strange was pumping faster now, less clinically. Loki could tell he was enjoying himself. This didn't feel like it was about protecting the Earth, not right now, this felt like Strange possessing Loki, owning him, devouring him. Rough hands on his hips, not shaking now, pulling Loki closer, harder, faster, digging bruises into his snow-white flesh.

Loki's whimper turned to an almost strangled shriek as he was mercilessly pounded. Strange clapped a hand over Loki's mouth, cutting off his whining and forcing his head up, his hair flowing in a tousled cascade over his neck. With a final groan, Strange collapsed onto Loki's back, both men breathing raggedly and wild-eyed. A bright orange glow flared up, illuminating the room, getting brighter and brighter until all at once it was gone, leaving no trace.

Stephen regained his composure first, lifting himself up and pulling his robes back into place. Loki lay on the cushion, his eyes unfocussed, still gasping for air. Slowly the room span back into view. He became aware of the silver chords digging into his wrists and back and of his own nakedness, still posed on full display in the middle of the room. But Stephen was no longer paying him any attention. Out of the corner of his eye, Loki could see him flipping through a battered spell book, muttering quietly under his breath, looking up every now and then to wave a hand and cause a rune to rearrange itself, now just dull chalk on the floor.

"I demand you release me immediately!" Loki hoped he sounded more authoritative than he felt.

Stephen looked up as if noticing him for the first time.

"Yes, yes," he muttered waiving a hand and Loki was fully dressed again, sitting back on the couch. The chains were gone, but a silver cuff remained around each wrist and ankle.

"Thank you for your assistance," Stephen added politely and seemingly without a hint of sarcasm, for all the world sounding like Loki had just offered him directions on the street. If it wasn't for a good chunk of his magic reserves having been sapped away, the sick feeling in the pit of his stomach and the dull throbbing in his ass, he might have wondered if the whole experience had been an illusion.

"I did not provide you any assistance and I most certainly do not accept any thanks." But despite himself, Loki was curious. "Did it work?"

"No, but it was close. I don't think the problem is in spell itself, it's in the ingredients."

“Clearly Asgardian magic is too powerful for your parlour tricks.”

Stephen shrugged. “That part was fine, in fact the way our magics started to blend was very promising. It looks to be more the catalyst that is at fault. The dominion wasn’t powerful enough. Still for a first attempt it was rather brilliant, if I do say so myself. Now to refine the process. Suggestions welcome by the way.”

Loki was sure he didn’t want to offer any suggestions.

“No? Shame. Well, we need to wait until your power’s full restored in any case, do let me know of anything that comes to you in the meantime. You may as well go back to sleep until then actually.”

With a flick of Stephen’s wrist Loki’s eyes began to feel heavy, the darkness closing in around him.

## Chapter 2

When Loki opened his eyes he was back in the chains, but this time suspended so his arms were spread out in a cross shape. He didn't know how long he had been asleep, but his magic felt fully replenished. As if Strange could read his mind, he heard a voice from behind him.

"Just to be clear, my previous instructions still stand, do what I tell you and don't use any magic unless I ask you to."

Loki gritted his teeth. It didn't matter, Strange hadn't countermanded his earlier orders so Loki had no way to disobey them without suffering, but he didn't enjoy being reminded.

Stephen appeared in his line of sight, holding a glass of what looked like water.

"Drink," he said, holding it to Loki's lips and tipping.

For once Loki was pleased that he had been ordered so he didn't have to make a show of refusing. The cool water felt good in his dry mouth and he drained the glass quickly.

"I'll get you something to eat too, after this next experiment."

Loki stared at him blankly, was he supposed to be grateful?

Strange busied himself continuing to cast swirling images in the air and settling them around the room.

"The sex wasn't enough," he explained, as though Loki had asked. "We need to ramp things up a bit. It needs to be clear that I am in charge. I think this will help."

Pointing one long finger towards the end of one of the silver chains Stephen drew it through the air producing new links that wrapped around Loki's arms, legs and torso, containing him tightly. A single silver threat twisted along Loki's spine and looped around his neck, flattening out into a thin collar.

"Open wide," Stephen whispered, with the lightest possible touch against Loki's lips.

Although Loki only hesitated for a moment, his skin immediately began to prickle uncomfortably at the delay. He opened his mouth and Stephen slipped in a large metal ball that he had plucked from the air. He brought two connected straps around behind Loki's head and fastened them.

Stephen's fingers slid down his back, caressing him gently. Like last time, Strange's hands were shaking, but apart from this he seemed anything but nervous. Also like last time, Loki felt his pulse quicken involuntarily. However disgusted he felt after Strange had violated him, his mind went back to the moments before the assault, the gentle touches, warm hands on his cool body, fingers running softly over his skin, lips pressed against his neck. Strange was doing the same now, leaving soft kisses along Loki's back, running his tongue down all the way to the mound of his ass.

With a quick mutter from Strange under his breath, Loki felt something hard and smooth pressing into his ass. The slick, curved surface slid in with ease, re-igniting the aching that he had experienced from Stephen's fingers, and then his cock, presumably just hours before. Despite himself, Loki moaned softly into the gag as the plug came to rest within him. He felt his cock twinge and begin to stiffen.

He closed his eyes, focusing on how obscene and humiliating the whole scenario was, reminding himself that he absolutely was not enjoying this. But if anything that seemed to make the unwanted feelings rise up inside him faster.

Loki felt something cold wind itself snugly around his balls and lattice up tightly over his hardening length. At the angle he was suspended, he couldn't look down to see exactly what Strange had done, but it seemed it was to be no secret. With a flail of his arm, the wall opposite Loki transformed into a large mirror in which Loki could see all too clearly his naked, gagged and bound form and the gleaming silver cock cage. He could also see that the runes around the room had already begun to glow ever so faintly.

Loki's first response to his reflection was horror. But his eyes widened as he took in the intricately entwined silver laced across his body, the collar also covered with faintly glowing runes. It was beautiful, he chastised himself for thinking.

Stephen gave him a moment to take it all in, his hands still exploring Loki's flesh. The fingers grew firmer, digging into Loki's muscles, nails pressing into soft skin. Stephen grabbed a handful of Loki's ass and squeezed hard then slapped the same place with a resounding twack that echoed in the cold marble room. The arm drew up again and Loki closed his eyes, not wanting to spectate on his own humiliation.

"Uh uh," whispered Strange. "Watch."

Loki's eyes snapped back open. He watched Stephen raise his hand and expected to feel it land again. Instead he saw a long whip bloom out of thin air, fine leather tails flowing out from an ornate silver handle. The tails whistled through the air and came crashing down across his shoulders. Loki winced and bit down into the unforgiving metal gag between his teeth.

Bringing the whip around again, Stephen struck him harder this time. Unconsciously, Loki's magic sprung up like a shield around him. The burning started immediately and the whip slamming against his already blistering skin caused blinding pain to sear across his retinas. He dropped his magic immediately and the blisters disappeared as quickly as they had come. Whether Stephen had noticed his transgression Loki didn't know. The blows just kept on coming, raining down across his shoulders, back, ass and thighs. Unable to close his eyes for longer than a quick blink, Loki couldn't avoid seeing the thin red lines the whip left on his pale flesh when it curled around his body. He saw the runes, their glow intensifying. And worst of all he saw the cold, almost clinical look on Strange's face as he handed out the punishment.

Loki sucked on the cold ball of the gag, trying to make that the centre of his sensation, rather than the fire being lit up across his back. Slowly, gradually, he began to regain some control of his breathing, silencing the whines he hadn't even been conscious he was making. The glowing of the runes reduced. Stephen clearly noticed this too because he paused his exertions and pressed the handle of whip into Loki's fingers. Loki was confused until Stephen leaned close and whispered into his ear.

"Use your magic. Make this whip into something that will actually hurt you."

Loki swallowed heavily. Unbidden, he felt magic flow through his veins, lighting up the fronds of the whip green with a crackling, electric energy.

Stephen took it back and swung it again. The difference was unmistakable.

Although Stephen had taken only a gentle swing to test his new device, Loki screamed into the gag. He saw drops of blood spring up on his skin where the ends of the whip licked around to his

stomach.

Stephen struck him again and again. Loki felt his skin slicing beneath the glowing tongues, the green haze of the whip blurring with the orange light of the runes, dancing like fireflies across his hazy vision. He was losing control rapidly, shrieking uncontrollably into the gag, his breathing pained and erratic. But it was clearly not enough. Looking frustrated, Stephen threw the whip aside and slammed Loki down to the floor on his knees.

Now that the onslaught had ended, Loki's world stopped spinning. The slices across his skin screamed, cool blood running down his back. With a flick of Strange's fingers, Loki felt the ball gag in his mouth changing. No longer a smooth sphere, the gag forced his mouth open, the cool air flowing in.

Stephen slid two fingers across Loki's lips then into his mouth. It was oddly, obscenely, intimate, perhaps even more so than when Strange's hands had been on his cock. The fingers depressed Loki's tongue, forcing their way into his throat and making him gag before being withdrawn. After a quick fumbling of clothing, the tip of Strange's cock was against Loki's lips.

Sliding forward, he pushed into Loki's waiting mouth. The ring prevented Loki from closing his mouth or bringing his lips around the intrusion. Stephen's strong hands pressed down on his shoulders. Loki knew better by now than to try and use magic to intervene. All he could do was stay put, pinned down and take the thick cock pressing into him.

Stephen guided himself into Loki's throat. Finally Loki's view of the mirror was obscured and he could close his eyes without consequence. He squeezed his eyes tight shut and tried to once again focus on his breathing. It wasn't easy. Strange was driving into Loki's throat, smothering him. Tears escaped, running down his face. His whole body was shaking, his legs weak under him. He was being held up only by Strange's hands, in his hair now, keeping Loki still while he pounded into him. He choked and gasped for breath but none came. His vision blurred and then began to fade to black as he crumpled to the ground.

Stephen let him fall, gasping and sobbing at his feet. Loki lay naked, bleeding and shaking from the pain coursing through his body, his mouth still held open by the gag, the silver chords cutting into his broken flesh now that he was twisted at an angle.

Stephen clicked his fingers and the gag and bindings dissolved, leaving only the thin cuffs around his wrists and ankle. The cock cage and plug stayed in place. Then, seemingly losing interest, Stephen turned away and began to scribble earnestly in a notepad he had plucked from the air.

"Please," whispered Loki pathetically.

Please what? Please let him go? Please come back? Loki didn't know and Stephen didn't react, already engrossed in his work.

As the adrenaline that had got him through the ordeal began to subside, Loki felt the dark cloud of shame descend over him. The feeble conjuror had beaten him, then forced him to use magic to create an instrument to enhance his torture. He had compelled Loki to watch his body mutilated, all the while bound up on display. He had used Loki's mouth like an object, uncaring whether Loki could breathe or that his eyes were streaming with tears. When Loki passed out he had been thrown aside, left on the ground, like rubbish. Strange had not even finished from the experience. Doubtless he found Loki just as disgusting as he now found himself.

Suddenly a gentle touch on his shoulder snapped him out of the spiral. A covering or blanket of some sort was descending over him. It settled carefully, avoiding lying on the worst of the lash

marks. He felt a soft fold of fabric stroke gently down his cheek, mopping up a stray tear that was making its way down his face. Loki didn't know if Strange had sent the cloak to cover him or if it had a mind of its own.

"For goodness sake, you sentimental dishcloth," muttered Stephen, seemingly answering Loki's question. But he didn't call the cloak away. Its edges tucked themselves under Loki, encasing him in a soft cocoon. This scrap of affection caused fresh tears to spring up in his eyes.

"Sleep now," whispered Stephen, softly.

## Chapter 3

The next few days were a grim cycle. Each time Loki woke he found himself restrained and displayed, his magic replenished and ready for another round.

Sometimes Stephen would pour water into his mouth or slacken his bonds so that he could feed himself. Strange retrieved these meals by opening portals and, by the looks of things, taking them from unsuspecting restaurant kitchens. Sometimes he seemed to forget that Loki might need food or drink. He'd grown sick of Loki's backchat and had got into the habit of telling Loki to "be silent" as soon as he awoke, so Loki usually wasn't able to remind him. Likewise Strange had stopped bringing Loki to the library now, waking him only when he was ready for another attempt.

Strange's experiments grew weirder and more desperate. There wasn't a part of Loki that didn't ache from repeated abuse. Bruises bloomed across his pale skin, lash marks criss-crossing over cuts and grazes from his falls to floor. His eyes were perpetually red from tears and his throat hoarse from screaming, which seemed to be an allowed exception from the "be silent" command.

Doubtless Strange could have found some incantation to heal Loki's wounds between sessions, but he seemed to choose not to. Perhaps it wasn't worth his time. Loki had tried demanding that Strange let him heal himself. When that was ignored, he had asked to at least be allowed to use his magic to provide some relief from the constant pain, but Strange had ignored him still. He refused to beg, so his only respite was the inevitable instruction to sleep when his use was over, if he hadn't passed out already.

Stephen was getting more and more frustrated. After his early successes he seemed to be plateauing. The runes would glow intermittently, but if anything they were getting less bright, as Loki grew more and more numb to the abuse, finding it increasingly easy to detach his mind from the pain and humiliation being inflicted on his body.

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For the first time, Loki felt he had woken up naturally and Strange was nowhere to be seen. He was surprised to find he was even wearing long silk pyjamas. He wasn't bound and seemed to have free reign of the room, but he could sense a powerful containment spell embedded in the walls and door. He swung his legs off the bed. They felt stiff and weak after being tied up for so long with so little use.

There was a small kitchen on one side of the room – a fireplace with a cooking pot, a cast iron tap and cupboards. Within these Loki found dried goods, vegetables, wrapped cheese, plates, cups, even a small keg of what smelled like beer. His hunger told him he'd been out for several hours at least, but his magic was not yet fully restored. His rumbling stomach overrode any concern about tricks that might be contained in these provisions. It had been a while since he had cooked for himself, so he stuck to pouring a cup of the beer and tearing off handfuls of the bread and cheese. He noticed that he had not been provided with any knives.

It wasn't long after he was done eating that he heard footsteps outside and a swift knock at the door. Without waiting for a response, a portal formed and Stephen stepped through.

"I came to offer you dinner," Stephen said by way of explanation, "but I see you found the supplies already."

He lingered slightly awkwardly. Loki wasn't going to break the silence and kept his eyes fixed on

Stephen, unblinking, accusatory.

“I need more information,” Stephen continued. “I’m thinking maybe it’s not the dominion that’s the problem, its the submission.”

“I am the problem? How terrible for you. I’ll be on my way then” spat Loki, quivering with indignation at the arrogance of a man who had so thoroughly abused him now coming here to say that Loki himself was in some way inadequate.

“What I mean,” Strange continued, “is that I think what the spell feeds on is not the objective experience of control, but the subjective experience of submission of the source mage. So I need to know, how did it feel for you?”

Loki hadn’t been directly ordered to speak, and so he remained silent. Realising his mistake, Stephen tried again.

“Tell me how it felt for you, when we were performing the rituals.” Then as an afterthought, “truthfully.”

Loki’s skin prickled. He had some time to compose his response, but he had to answer.

“Painful,” he said simply.

“Not physically, how did you feel, emotionally?”

This time Loki answered immediately, before his skin had a chance to start tingling.

“Bad. It felt bad. I felt bad. It is shameful.”

Stephen had the decency to look uncomfortable.

“I know much of the ritual was painful,” he said at last, “but I had thought from your response the first time, maybe you took some enjoyment, from at least part of it. Was that not the case?”

“The impertinence!” Loki scoffed. “I am a prince of Asgard and you dishonour me with your actions, which you can only do by twisting my own power against me. You have no power, no strength of your own. It brings me no enjoyment to be anywhere near you, feeble mortal.”

But Loki knew that wasn’t quite the whole story. Certainly he did feel ashamed and degraded by the experiences of the past few days, which had been, for the most part, horrifying. But he had also felt other emotions, which his youth in Asgard had not equipped him with the words to describe. His skin began to prickle and he realised he was going to be compelled to try. He kept his mouth shut for as long as possible, until his skin writhed with invisible tendrils, the blisters beginning to rise up under the marks Stephen had left across his body.

His voice unsteady under the pain, he muttered, “Well, some of it provided a small modicum of enjoyment.”

The writing subsided immediately to a light itch.

“What kind? Which parts?” Stephen bombarded him immediately.

Loki had no desire to feel the blistering again so he proceeded, although it turned his stomach to here the words leave his mouth.

“Being helpless was... exciting. I didn’t want to enjoy it, but when it wasn’t painful, some part of

me did. Some, small part of me found it... arousing. Then the physical pain, I didn't enjoy it. I wanted it to end, but, just sometimes, some other part of me wanted it to continue."

He shuddered. He wished he could wipe the words out of his mouth, out of his memory.

Stephen seemed to be thinking.

"So," he said at length. "You're not necessarily adverse to the, um, activities, what bothered you was me."

The way Stephen said this it was clear he felt making such an admission was extremely magnanimous.

"Your distaste in being treated in such a way by someone you don't respect, and more fool you in that regard, is getting in the way of you getting into the proper head space for the spell to be effective!"

Stephen looked pleased with himself, like he had figured out a particularly difficult puzzle. He carried on, excitedly.

"You said in Asgard victors can take what they want from the warriors they defeat?"

"Indeed," said Loki warily.

"And there is no shame in it?"

"There is shame," Loki clarified. "But there is also justice. There is acceptance of the rights of the victor. Justice is always honourable."

Stephen's brow crinkled in confusion. He wasn't sure he followed the logic of Asgard sometimes, but that was unimportant. Spinning his hands to form a portal in front of him he turned to Loki, his eyes bright and a smile plastered across his face that Loki found deeply disturbing.

"I have just had an excellent idea!"

## Chapter 4

“Alright doc, what’s the big deal?” Tony Stark flipped up his visor and strolled into library.

“I need your help again Stark, but no need for the tin can jacket.”

Tony shrugged and flicked his wrist, the Iron Man suit folding up into a wristband in seconds.

“Tea?” offered Stephen. “Perhaps something stronger?”

Tony shrugged again as the mug in his fingers turned into a glass of scotch.

Stephen looked Stark up and down. He didn’t much care for asking for his help, but as well as his famous defeat of Loki, he knew that despite Stark’s brashness he could be discrete when he had to be and was not adverse to a little unorthodox evening entertainment.

When Stephen explained what he needed, Stark took a large swig of his scotch. Strange took the pause in conversation as the opportunity to dematerialise the pair of them and send them instantaneously to the venue of his rituals.

Loki knelt on the floor. His legs were pinned down at the ankles, his arms pulled back and spread out behind him, cuffed at the wrists so that he was forced to lean back. A silver gag covered his mouth. His eyes had snapped open at the pair’s arrival and they grew wide seeing Tony Stark step into the room alongside his tormentor. Loki’s face flushed red, the humiliation of his situation presenting itself to him anew now that there was a further witness to his denigration.

Tony looked equally taken aback as he cast his eyes over Loki’s bound form.

“And you’re telling me he’s agreed to all this?”

“Yes Stark, I told you it was a fair bargain.”

“Hmmm,” Tony mused hesitantly. “If it’s all the same to you, I’d rather hear it from his own mouth. He’s not my favourite person, but I have some principles.”

“Very well,” said Strange, and the silver gag unfurled itself. “Loki, tell Stark that you’re here to help me protect the Earth.”

As if the spell could sense that any hesitation would raise suspicion, the blistering feeling began almost immediately until Loki blurted out, “I’m here to assist the Doctor to protect this realm.”

Tony looked sceptical.

“Why the jewellery then?” he said, indicating Loki’s wrist and ankle cuffs.

“Just keeping us all in the right frame of mind. Plus he’s got a history. It never hurts to be too careful.”

Tony only nodded.

“Well then,” continued Stephen, “no time like the present.”

“I guess,” said Tony, looking around the room uncomfortably. “I’m not sure this whole set up’s really doing it for me though if I’m honest, it’s a bit clinical. I prefer things more, y’know, rough

and ready.”

Stephen raised an eyebrow.

“Rough and ready? Let me see if I can help.” Stephen raised his hands and drew a swirling spiral through the air.

“Ah... I see” he chuckled “let’s try this...”

All at once the walls dissolved around them and they appeared in Tony’s penthouse. It was looking decidedly the worse for wear. Two of the windows were smashed, the furniture was in disarray and there were even large craters in the floor.

Loki’s eyes widened. He recognised immediately the setting of his failed invasion of Midgard, where he had been bested by the Avengers. Looking down he was relieved to see he was no longer naked, but dressed in his black and green leather armour. He still wore chains though, his hands loosely linked up to a silver collar which was snug around his neck.

Tony seemed immediately more comfortable in the familiar setting and not in the least put out to be reminded of the destruction of his home. He picked up a bottle from behind the bar and poured himself a glass like he was back in his own living room.

Strange came up behind Loki and put one heavy hand on his shoulder. Loki didn’t fight the clear command to fall to his knees. Strange looked at Tony expectantly. Tony strolled over to stand in front of Loki. Bending down he put two fingers under Loki’s chin and raised his head up so that Loki’s eyes met his own. He ran his thumb down Loki’s cheek and then softly across his bottom lip.

“Mmm, yes, you looked so good that day. Don’t think that fact escaped me just because I was a little distracted by you trying to kill us all. In your fancy leather dress-up, your big man act. You thought you were all that, until we showed you who you really are. So delicious, so vulnerable. It was good for you that the rest of the Avengers were there that day, that you got carted off to Asgard. If you’d been left with me, things might have been different. I might have dispensed some justice the Asgardian way. Yes, Thor’s told me, victor’s spoils and all that.”

His words were low and confident, sending a shiver down Loki’s spine, but his eyes told another story, flicking nervously towards Stephen.

Kneeling here, on the floor of the penthouse, brought the invasion of New York flooding back to Loki. He had been a mess, driven by jealousy, haunted by the horrors he had seen during this time with Thanos. His very sense of self had been twisted by the power of the mind stone, with which he had, so nearly, orchestrated the conquest of Midgard.

But there was another part of that day he had tried to push out of his mind. Chitauri soldiers had been pouring into the city, his brother and the Avengers were out there, closing in. He knew he should have taken himself to safety, wait out for the Chitauri’s inevitable triumph. But there was one thing he had to do before that. He had to see Tony Stark.

At the time, he didn’t know quite why he felt so drawn to this jumped-up Midgardian, who had treated him with such disdain. He only knew that the moment their paths had crossed in Germany, something about him had caused Loki to pause his attack. Loki has been as surprised as anyone to find himself surrendering to the puny mortal, but his curiosity to get closer to Stark won out. He rationalised to himself that sticking close to Stark could bring him into the heart of the Avenger’s operation. From there, he could destroy them, or have them eating from the palm of his hand,

whichever was more efficient. But it hadn't quite worked out that way. Loki didn't know why, but he knew he had to speak to Stark again before the mortal was likely obliterated in the invasion.

So Loki had found himself in Stark's living room. If he could control the legendary Iron Man, he told himself, perhaps his victory would come even sooner, and more completely. But as soon as Loki had seen Stark, he knew that wasn't why he was really here. The sudden realisation that he, the God of Mischief, had, what, a "crush" on this pathetic human "hero" enraged Loki. It had always been the same, throughout his youth on Asgard. The objects of his affections had never been appropriate for a prince, and here he was yet again, another silly infatuation, this time for an enemy, an obstacle in his way! The mind stone took this anger and amplified it. Loki, in his rage, had picked up Stark by the neck and flung him out of the window.

How the tables had turned. Now here he was, at the mercy of this man that, not so very long ago, he had tried to kill.

Out of the corner of his eye, Loki saw Stephen nod almost imperceptibly. Tony spun around behind Loki, crouching down and pulling his head back by the hair hard enough to make Loki yelp in surprise.

"Me and my buddy here," Tony continued, his face pressed up to Loki's ear, "we think you need to apologise."

"I... I'm sorry," stuttered Loki shaken by Tony's sudden change in tone and demeanour. Strange hadn't yet commanded him to follow Tony's orders, but he surely would do if Loki showed even the slightest sign that he wasn't going to comply. Better to go along with it for now, stall Strange as long as possible from giving orders that would boil away his skin if he disobeyed.

"What for?" Tony growled, apparently not satisfied.

"For this," Loki scanned the room with his eyes, "for invading Midgard, for bringing the Chitauri here, for, for, attacking New York!"

"What do you think, doc?" pressed Tony. "Do you think he's sorry enough, or do you think he needs to prove it to us? C'mon Reindeer Games, show me how sorry you are."

He released Loki's hair letting him drop forward onto his hands and knees. Roughly grabbing him by the collar, he half dragged Loki as he scrambled across the ruined floor to what remained of the sofa. Sitting himself down on the edge and unzipping his pants, Tony shoved Loki's face roughly toward his crotch.

"Show me."

Loki hesitated for only a moment. He reached forward, only for his hand to be batted away.

"Uh-uh," chided Stark. "Just your mouth."

Tony pushed Loki's head down towards his lap. The last Loki saw of the room out of the corner of his eye, glowing runes began to descend to line the floor around him. For all the masterful words, Loki felt a certain hesitation from Tony before he finally guided Loki's head down onto his cock. Maybe despite Strange's and Loki's own assurances about Loki's willingness, Stark has some residual doubts about the wisdom of putting his more sensitive body parts between his former enemy's teeth.

Tony let Loki set the pace, his hand resting gently on Loki's neck as his head bobbed up and down over his length. This was different from the many times over the past few days that Strange had

used his mouth. He wasn't wearing the ring gag, he wasn't being held in place, with a cock being forced into his throat. Here he was being asked to perform. To use his lips, his tongue, the gentlest touches of his teeth, to please this mortal.

He could have stopped. Strange still hadn't instructed him to obey Tony or given him any further orders for this situation, other than the standing rule not use his magic unless told. But he was aware of Stephen watching closely behind him. He could command Loki at any time. Put the ring gag on him and have Stark fuck his throat, or force him to choke himself on Stark's length. No, this was better. Do a good job on his own terms. And he seemed to be doing that. Risking a quick glance upwards, Stark was flopped out on the couch, head back, lips parted, breathing shallowly, a soft moan escaping his lips.

"More," came Stephen's soft voice from behind him after what must have been only a few of minutes, but felt to Loki like much longer. This seemed to snap Tony back to reality and he brought his hand from Loki's hair to his forehead, gently pushing him up and off of him.

"There's not going to be much more if I'm not careful. Either it's not this guy's first time as this particular rodeo or he's a natural."

Looking up at Stark from his kneeling position Loki couldn't help but feel a nagging sense of pride at the praise after so many days of insults at worst, indifference at best, to his performances.

"I'm a God," he said simply, the corner of his mouth twisting into the barest hint of a smile.

"For the first time, I might believe that," gulped Stark, still trying to recover himself.

Stephen seemed impatient.

"More, now!" he hissed, and Loki noticed the glow of runes around him was fading slightly.

"Tony, remember what I told you!"

"Alright, alright."

Stark leaned forward and with no warning slapped Loki across the face. Loki gasped, more from the shock than anything. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw the runes flair. Stark grabbed him by the throat, his fingers digging into the soft flesh. His eyes were dark and fixed straight at Loki's own.

"I don't think you're sorry enough," he hissed, "it's time for your punishment."

Stark snapped his fingers and two of his suits spun into view. Grasping Loki roughly by the arms they raised him up, holding him under the wrists and armpits. A third suit dove towards him. Loki saw blades on its palms and started to struggle. Perhaps Stark really would take revenge. Strange had said that he wouldn't call on the power of the dark dimension to kill Loki. Perhaps that was why he needed Stark – to do what Strange wasn't willing to do himself!

The suits' grip was solid, unyielding and as Loki kicked out his legs, they simply bent their own legs around his, pinning him stationary in the air. Loki shut his eyes and screwed up his face, pushing himself as far away from those blades as possible. He felt the air moving around him and heard the swish and rip of the blades, slicing through his leather armour as if it were silk, leaving Loki completely naked. The robot's skilful actions left Loki unharmed underneath.

He glanced down. He should have seen the scars and bruises across his body from Strange's recent treatment, but they were not there. He could still feel them, the low ache of the bruises, the dull itch of the lash marks beginning to heal, but his skin looked as perfect as it had when he lived a life

of leisure in Asgard.

Strange must be glamouring him, Loki thought, doubtless for Tony's benefit. Presumably because Tony would find the reality of his damaged body repulsive. The idea flashed across his mind that perhaps Strange thought his hero friend would object to his treatment of Loki. That Stark might not help if he learned the true nature of the bargain and Loki's status as unwilling participant. Loki dismissed this thought as quickly as it came. Surely Stark would be pleased, if anything, to see his enemy, his rival, so reduced. Certainly he seemed keen enough to "punish" Loki now.

Tony gave a low whistle as he paced across the floor, taking Loki in, naked and suspended. His eyes came to rest on the silver cock cage and then the matching silver butt plug, which Strange clearly hadn't decided to glamour. "You've been having some fun I see, doc."

"Hit him again," whispered Strange softly. And as if responding to Strange's command, the suits lowered Loki down, pushing him to floor so that he was again kneeling before Stark, but this time his body completely exposed before his adversary.

Tony raised his hand and slapped Loki hard across the face. This time Loki was ready for it. He barely flinched as the blow landed, his eyes locked on Stark's. The runes blipped slightly, but didn't burn anything like as bright as the first time.

"Again," hissed Strange, his focus on the runes and not on Loki. Tony lowered his eyes, breaking the intense eye contact with the God who waited, expectantly, at his feet. He slapped Loki again, harder. Loki was impressed by how much power this mortal could pack, but he had taken far more severe beatings and he barely turned his head at the blow, keeping his eyes fixed on Stark.

"Again," said Strange, waiving his hands through the air spinning some new spell.

Tony raised his hand again and brought it down against Loki's cheek. This time the force of the blow knocked Loki spinning and he went down, falling to his hands and elbows on the floor. Panting heavily, the room spun around him and the icy taste of blood spilled into his mouth. Scanning with his tongue he found one of his lower teeth was broken and jagged. The light of the runes burned into the corners of his eyes. He raised his head, looking up through his hair at Tony confused.

Tony looked down aghast at the blood flowing from the split in Loki's lip, dripping onto the floor, and the bright red strike mark across his face. Looking to his own hand, Tony saw it covered in the heavy metal Iron Man armour. Stephen was oblivious, eyes closed, clearly concentrating on the power flowing through his enchantments.

"Hey!" yelled Stark, breaking Stephen out of his reverie, the glove retracting instinctively back into its wristband. "What the hell man!"

Stephen closed his eyes again, concentrating.

"Keep going, keep going, that was the closest we've been."

Stark wide-eyed in horror hesitated for a moment.

"Are you okay?" he asked Loki.

Loki felt even more confused by this. How was he supposed to answer that? Before he could open his mouth to respond, Strange answered for him.

"It doesn't matter Stark, it's working, keep going." And with a flick of his wrist Loki was spun

around and bent forward, his hand and forehead flat to the ground, his ass raised.

The runes were still burning brightly, but the glow was no longer intensifying. Tony looked from Strange to Loki and back again several times. He walked around and crouched down in front of Loki, slipping two fingers under his chin and raising Loki's eyes up to meet his own again, just like he had when they first arrived at the penthouse.

"Listen. Stephen's told me how important this shield is and how you want to help. I'm in for saving the world. It's kinda my thing. But this is a whole different type of fucked up from the shit I usually have to do. I only want to do this if it's okay with you. Will you let me?" he asked softly but clearly.

Loki tried to find the words to answer, but he was still in shock from the surprise of Stark's reinforced blow. Part of him was fearful that Stark really would kill him here, take his revenge while Loki had no way to stop him. But the more rationale part of his brain told him, this didn't seem like a man about to commit murder. Stark seemed all at once masterful and confident, but also uncertain, like he knew something here wasn't right. He also for some reason Loki couldn't fathom seemed to care about Loki's opinion, about whether or not he was okay with what was happening to him. Loki couldn't remember the last time someone had asked him something like that, knowing who he was, and genuinely cared about the answer. With all this spinning through his head, he hadn't yet answered Stark's question.

Stephen's voice cut through. "Just answer the question, Loki."

He felt the tingling start right away. And he realised what Strange had done. He was only permitted to answer the question, and the question was would he let Stark do this! Of course he would. Whether or not he was "okay" as this strange mortal seemed so fond of asking, Thor had told him to do whatever Stephen said. If he didn't let Stark do it, Stephen would force him to anyway. And on average, the things Strange had forced him to do were significantly more unpleasant than the things Tony had so far done. Of course he would let Stark. All he could do was nod, gently sucking on his bleeding lip and looking through his bedraggled hair.

Stark brushed away Loki's hair. He ran a finger across the cheek where the red mark still blazed. Then he cupped Loki's face with his hand and took him by complete surprise by leaning in and kissing him, off-centre of his mouth to avoid touching the split skin of his lower lip, but unmistakably tender. Loki felt even more stunned by this than the slap. The runes continued to glow, strong and steady.

"Okay," whispered Stark. Then turning away added sternly, "No more funny business, doc."

Stephen didn't respond, focused on the orange glow.

Loki heard Tony once again unzipping his pants, fumbling with his clothing and a sachet of something. He felt Tony's rough hand grasp his ass, the plug being gently worked out of him, clanging as it was discarded on the hard floor. He felt the thick head of a slicked-up cock replace it, pushing gently at his entrance. Tony pressed forward slowly, carefully, giving Loki time to adjust. This wasn't like when Stephen took him. Despite the public set up, Strange still muttering his enchantments, it felt much more intimate.

Tony pulled lightly on Loki's hips, easing himself forward. His fingers digging into the bruises along Loki's hip bones made Loki whine softly, but Tony couldn't see those bruises, he reminded himself. To Tony's eyes he would look fresh, perfect.

As Stark's hips came to rest, cock fully enclosed, he rubbed Loki's lower back gently.

“That’s good, that’s good,” he whispered huskily, “you’re doing so well, you look so beautiful.”

Loki’s eyes prickled. He was glad he was facing away, pressed down against the floor. He didn’t know why these simple words made tears spring up. Even though Tony’s fingers fluttered unwittingly over the unseen lash marks, the touch wasn’t hurting him. If anything, something about it felt comforting. Loki had thought about Tony several times in long night alone in the Asgardian dungeons, but never had he imagined his fantasy playing out quite like this.

Loki focused on Tony’s heavy breath behind him, the warmth of his hands against his cool skin, the heavy feeling of his cock embedded inside him. Tony began to move his hips gently, rocking slowly backwards and forwards, allowing Loki to get used to the motion before increasing the pace.

They were in their own world, the sorcerer and the runes were forgotten. Tony whispered gently into his ear, “you’re doing so good, so good for me.”

Once again Loki’s treacherous body belied his unwillingness. His cock strained inside the silver cage and he moaned into each thrust. Loki’s apparent enthusiasm seemed to light something up inside of Tony and he picked up the pace, pounding Loki harder and faster, grabbing his hips, his ass, running his hands over his caged cock and balls. Loki shivered and cried out until Tony gave a final deep thrust, spilling into him, holding Loki tightly to his body. When he was done Loki flopped to the ground, his face strewn with blood and tears.

## Chapter 5

After who knows how long, Loki's eyes swam back into focus. Tony had fixed his clothing, broadly, and was stretched out on the sofa. He patted the seat next to him, indicating that Loki should join him. Loki scrambled up, still naked, but self conscious now. He wished the cape would come to his rescue, but there was no sign it was leaving its master. However, there was a ragged sofa throw, which Tony, unprompted, draped over him. Loki felt himself pathetically grateful for the gesture and pulled it up so it covered his head like a hood, tucking his legs up onto the sofa so that his whole body was hidden.

All around them the penthouse glowed with a bright orange light, warm and steady. Stephen hung a few feet in the air in the centre of the room, his hair dishevelled, droplets of sweat sparklingly in the amber light. His eyes were closed, brow furrowed in an expression of pure concentration, his arms swirled creating fiery shapes that blended and danced. The light was growing, getting brighter, the very air seemed to hum with it, crackling like electricity. Sparks began to fly from Stephen's hands, sizzling where they hit the floor and adding a layer of black soot to the carnage.

Tony looked sideways at Loki.

"C'mon," he said grabbing Loki by the wrist and pulling him gently up from the sofa in the direction of the bar.

Loki followed mute, still wrapped in his blanket. Stark picked up the bottle of scotch he had poured a drink from earlier and sunk down, back to the bar, using it as a kind of shield from the pyrotechnics. Now he had a drink in hand, he seemed quite content to wait until the show was over. Tony took a swig with a satisfied sigh and passed it to Loki, who had crouched down beside him. A swift gulp started to bring his senses back.

"Reindeer Games, why are you really doing this, trying to 'protect the Earth'?"

The answer was obvious.

"Thor," he said deadpan.

Tony laughed. "Wow, that guy finally managed to talk some sense into you did he? He always said you were a good guy, deep down. Although I'm still not entirely sure you're not just manipulating the good doctor here to get your kicks."

Loki didn't react to Tony's jibe, taken off guard by the mention of his brother. Thor had told the Avengers he was a "good guy"? Thor who had offered him up to that maniac Strange, knowing what he would do to him, or if he did not know, not caring enough to find out?

"That's not quite what happened," Loki began boldly. He didn't know why, but he felt a sudden compulsion to let Stark know what was really going on here, however much it might start his skin off screaming. It barely had time to tingle before he was cut off by a bright flash and wave of heat, accompanied by a loud bang that seemed to emanate from the air itself. The room was plunged into darkness and silence.

Tony raised his head slowly over the bar. Stephen was back on the ground, still dishevelled, but no longer concentrating. He, and everything around him, was dark with soot, some parts of the floor and furnishings still smouldering. When he spoke, however, he was the picture of composure.

"Thank you, Tony, that was excellent, the closest we have come so far! I think one or two more

tries and I might just perfect this. Will you return tomorrow?"

Tony glanced down at Loki, who remained wrapped in his blanket. "Does that work for you?" he asked. After a moment Loki realised Tony was directing the question at him.

"Yes," he said simply.

If Strange compelled him to answer, it was the only possible response; any day until Thor's return would "work for him". But his answer wasn't wholly directed by the oath. This had been yet another day of pain, fear and humiliation. But Stark had a right to do these things to him, and more, having bested Loki in fair combat. To do these things, Loki thought with a shudder, at the bidding of this hero of Midgard was certainly unpalatable, but a significant step up from being beaten down and bent over by the jumped up warlock.

Stark seemed to have no problem abusing him, but was he was gentler, kinder in the way he spoke to Loki, as well as the way he touched him. Judging by the episode with the metal glove there also seemed to be a limit to the torment Stark wanted to inflict. For some reason Stark had been annoyed when Strange had intervened to increase the damage. Loki didn't understand what had happened exactly, but this reaction, the uncertainty in Stark's eyes, his repeated questioning and the fact that Stephen had chosen to glamour away his wounds made Loki suspect that perhaps Stark would be less than pleased at discovering his ally's methods.

There was also the small matter of Loki's "feelings" towards Tony, but he pushed those quickly aside. If he could get a chance to speak to him alone again he might at the very least get some helpful information. Yes, until Loki could figure out how to break free of the spell, Tony coming back tomorrow would "work for him" very well.

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The next day Loki was allowed to wake again naturally in the soft bed in the small apartment, his magic fully restored. It must have been a couple of days since the last of Strange's beatings and his wounds were beginning to heal, although bruises and cuts still emblazoned his body. There was also now the split lip and broken tooth to add to his list of ailments, and the slap mark from the Iron Man glove which had bloomed into a deep bruise across his face, tender to the touch.

After Loki had raided the cupboards and eaten his fill, Strange knocked politely on the door, before creating a portal to step through. Show-off, thought Loki, is he incapable of using a door handle?

"Ready?" he asked, as if Loki's answer made a difference.

"I've been thinking about how to enhance the experience for you. I just need to grab a quick picture to help me build the set."

He reached out one hand towards Loki's temple. Loki flinched away instinctively.

"Stay still. It won't hurt."

Unable to back away, Loki felt Stephen's fingers press into his forehead and the prickly tingle of clumsy Midgardian magic probing into his brain.

"Perfect!" whispered Strange, and with an excited twinkle in his eye, "here we go!"

The room twisted and blurred. Loki felt himself spinning through space until he landed with a thump on his knees. He was also far from shocked to discover that he was now naked, except for

the metal ball gag, which had appeared in his mouth and a thick metal collar connected to a chain that bound his hands in front of him. And of course, he wore the cock cage. Familiar golden steps stretched out beneath him and, looking up, he saw the end of the chain secured to the armrest of the throne of Asgard. Perfect indeed, thought Loki. Chained and gagged before his own throne.

Strange opened a portal at the foot of the stairs and Stark walked through. He spun around to take in a full 360 of the throne room and whistled.

“Wow-ee, sweet digs, doc!”

“This is the throne room of the Royal Palace of Valaskjalf, Asgard, Stark. In short, it's his digs, not mine. Or at least a representation of it.”

“An illusion? That’s good!” said Stark, casting a relieved look up at Loki, naked and bound. “I wouldn’t fancy Thor strolling in to this particular soirée. I don’t think it would end well for either of us.”

Having finished admiring the scenery, Stark headed up the stairs, where Stephen was busying himself with preparatory spell work.

“Your seat, sir,” said Stephen playfully directing Tony towards the throne. But Tony didn’t immediately sit down.

“Hey Bambi,” he said at length. Loki looked up at him through his hair and grunted what could have been a “hey” through the gag. He didn’t approve of the nickname, but Tony looked even more pleasing than yesterday bathed in the golden light of the throne room. Loki tried to put these unhelpful thoughts to the back of his mind.

“You doing okay?” Tony asked casually, as if he had just happened to run into Loki at one of those gaudy Midgardian alehouses.

Loki paused before nodding slowly. If he could get away with Stephen not requiring him to follow Tony’s orders again, so much the better.

“I’m glad you’re looking better than yesterday, the lip I mean. I’m sorry about that by the way, I didn’t mean to do it. I’m not going to let Glinda the not-so-good witch here do anything like that today.”

Loki shrugged by way of response.

Tony crouched down and leaned his face close to Loki’s. Loki could smell his cologne, deep and musky, and feel his breath, warm against his skin. Tony looked directly into his eyes, but Loki found it at once unsettling and arousing, and cast his gaze downwards.

Tony put a finger under Loki’s chin and gently tilted his head sideways, throwing light onto the side where his split lip and bruise should be. Or rather, were, just that Stephen must be glamouring him again, because Tony said, “Wow, you Asgardians really do heal fast! I mean, I know you guys are pretty much indestructible, but you were pretty beat up yesterday, and today, just perfect!”

He ran a thumb along Loki’s lower lip. He was gentle, but even the slight pressure on Loki’s wound caused him to flinch, stretched as it was over the heavy ball gag in his mouth.

Stark’s eyes narrowed.

“Hey Stevie, how about you undo some of this silver-work and let me and Lokes have a little chat

first?"

Stephen glanced up from his work.

"I don't think that's necessary," he said dismissively.

Looking frustrated, Tony turned his attention back to Loki.

"Loki, are your injuries healed?" he demanded directly, using his proper name for the first time, Loki noticed.

Loki shook his head, not making eye contact.

"Alright Gandalf, quit your mumbo-jumbo a minute and tell me what's going on here?"

Stephen sighed lowering his arms.

"You prefer him with a cut up face Stark? That's fine with me, I just thought you might find this look a little more appealing."

"You thought, did you? What did he think?"

"What he thinks is not important."

"Uh-uh, nope! If you expect me to do anything like what we did yesterday, what he thinks is extremely important. Now take off whatever spell you've cast on him to clean him up and let him speak to me!"

"Fine," huffed Stephen with a careless flick of the wrist removing Loki's glamour and the metal ball from his mouth.

Tony gawped.

Loki took his eyes swiftly back down to the floor. He could only see his arms and legs in front of him, but he realised what an unappealing sight he must present, layered in cuts and bruises, already losing his toned muscles from lack of food and exercise.

His visions of Stark as his – what? his saviour? some kind of protector? - began to fade. Once Stark saw how even this feeble conjuror could treat him, there would be no reason to afford him even the simple courtesies of their last meeting.

"What's happened to you?" Stark croaked hoarse.

"The doctor has been trying to make the shield. He had several failed attempts before he involved you. These are the side effects."

"Open your mouth again." Loki obliged and Tony used his thumb to ever so gently pull down his lip from the uninjured side.

"Your tooth! Did I break it yesterday when I hit you?"

"Yes," said Loki simply.

"But, but you said you were okay, you said I should keep going?"

"That is correct."

“Why?” Stark gazed into Loki’s eyes, his face the picture of confusion. Something about that sorrowful look loosened Loki’s tongue and in the absence of instructions to the contrary, it all came spilling out.

“In a moment of weakness caused by Mjölnir flying directly at my face, I promised Thor I would help him find Odin, to do whatever he told me to. Thor in his infinite wisdom made a deal with this purveyor of cheap tricks. I am bound by my own oath to do whatever this fool says, with no trickery, until Thor returns. What you see is what he has done.”

Stark’s face crumpled as this sunk in. He looked devastated, Loki thought in surprise. Judging by his face, you would have thought Stark was the one chained up, about to be violated.

“So, you aren’t actually doing this because you want to protect Earth? When you said Thor was the reason, it wasn’t that Thor talked you in to cleaning up your act, it was that Thor threatened you, then sold you off.”

So that was what the look meant, thought Loki. He was disappointed in Loki not being the “good guy” he had expected.

“Correct,” Loki said, ashamed. He wanted to hang his head, but Stark still had his hand under Loki’s chin, so he contented himself with lowering his eyes again, to look down at Stark’s palm.

“You didn’t agree to any of this?”

“I did, I agreed to do whatever Thor told me. I swore it to the Norns.”

“Did you think about... this... when you made that promise?” asked Stark, gesturing to Loki’s mangled body. “Did Thor know what the doc had planned when he handed you over?”

“I did not. I did not think about anything, I just made the oath and now without my magic I have no way to undo it. The fault is mine, I was foolish. I do not know what Thor may or may not have known. I was not present for the bargain.”

“I’ve heard enough,” Stark thundered, standing up.

This was it then, Loki thought. Stark knew just what a pathetic creature he had become and he was ready to get on with proceedings.

“Strange! This is fucked up, man, even for you!”

“Really Stark, now you develop a moral compass? Remember who you’re dealing with here – this so-called god brought Thanos here, he killed scores of people. A great danger is coming and it is my responsibility to protect reality.”

“This isn’t how we do things. I’m not helping you and you need to stop this right now. Keep him prisoner until Thor gets back, fine, god knows what he might do if you give him his magic back and let him wander off, but these “experiments”, this torture. It stops.”

“Or what Stark? What are you going to do about it?”

Stark took one step forward towards Stephen, raising his arm instinctively to call for his suit, but inside of this illusion he had no wristband, no connection to Friday. A portal opened beneath him and he dropped like a stone out of the throne room.

The golden walls dissolved around Loki and he found himself back in Stephen’s library at the

sanctum, fully dressed in the silk pyjamas, he was pleased to add and even seated on the sofa. Stephen was silent for a moment, pacing up and down.

“Okay,” he said finally. “Here are your instructions.”

## Chapter 6

There was an enormous crashing sound and the wall of the room burst apart. As the cloud of dust settled, a flash of red and gold armour zoomed through the gap. The face plate flipped up and Tony surveyed what was left of the room.

“C’mon then,” he whispered urgently, holding out a hand as Loki scrambled off the bed. His arms were still in the loose chains connected to the thin neck collar, but he had enough range of motion to take Tony’s hand between both of his own.

“God knows how that worked in the first place, but I can’t imagine the wicked witch of the west is going to take long to send the flying monkeys after me.”

Loki looked confused.

“Flying mon-,” he began.

“Nevermind.”

Tony drew him in close, wrapping his arm around his pyjama-clad body and holding him tightly.

“Hang on, we better get out of here sharpish.”

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It was pitch black when they landed on the roof of the penthouse. Tony released Loki and flipped his face plate back up, but didn’t take off his suit as he indicated that Loki should walk ahead of him down the steps into the lounge. Loki was pleased to see it in a much better condition than last time.

Tony didn’t speak until he had poured himself and Loki each a large measure of scotch. He indicated to the sofa and Loki sat down.

“So,” he said, “what do I do with you now?”

Loki assumed this was a rhetorical question, but Tony just gazed at him until he realised he was actually expected to answer.

“You have to return me to Strange,” he said and saw Tony’s eyes widen. “I mean, we have to complete the shield or Thor will never return from his quest, never recover Odin, and I remain bound to follow Strange’s orders.”

“And what are his orders exactly?”

“To do what he tells me, and not to use magic unless he asks me to.”

“And is escaping and flying half the way around the world included in “doing what he’s told you”?”

A ghost of a smile danced on Loki’s lips. “He never told me not to.”

Tony snorted.

“And you absolutely can’t use magic right now? He’s not here to tell you to do any wizardry, so

you can't do it?"

"What I do is not "wizardry", but yes, that's correct, I cannot use my powers unless he instructs me, which is why I must be returned so that this worthless task of his can be completed and my magic restored."

Something seemed to trouble Tony.

"Can't you just not do what he tells you? What would happen if you just used some magic right now, pulled a bunny out of a hat or something."

"While I've no idea what purpose a rabbit could serve at this time, Stark, that is absolutely out of the question! I have sworn an oath to the Norns. If I tried to break my oath my skin would slowly boil, I would be melted away to an eternity in Hel!"

"Right, right, okay don't do that then."

Tony stared at Loki for several moments. Loki realised he must be weighing up whether to believe him. From his face, it seemed the deliberation was inconclusive.

"There must be another way though. You're bad news, and I don't trust you, but I can't just give you back to him. Who knows what he's going to do or how long he'll keep doing it for. Can he even really make this "shield"? I can't just return you to potentially an eternity of torture!"

Loki paused. Why not? He couldn't help but wonder. He'd seen yesterday that Stark did not want to debase himself with involvement in this depravity, that once Loki's true appearance was revealed he was disgusted, but why did he have a problem with Strange doing such things?

"There is one other way, perhaps, Stark, if you were willing to help me. But really, it is asking a lot of you."

Tony kept his gaze steady, saying nothing yet as Loki went on.

"That day, in this room, or the illusion of this room at least, Strange said it was the closest he ever came to creating the shield. Perhaps, with practice, you and I can create a power strong enough to make this defence, to complete the task, bring Thor and Odin back, and restore my freedom."

Tony looked uncertain. "I've got a hell of a lot of questions about that buddy. But I'll start with what are you gonna do when you get your powers back?"

Loki rushed to provide reassurance.

"I will leave here, you have my word – I will leave Earth with all of its people unharmed."

"Even Stephen?"

"Yes, even that accursed wizard if that's your condition."

Tony looked sceptical.

"Why would you agree to that? You don't exactly strike me as the forgiving type?"

"I have other priorities. A great crisis is brewing in Asgard. My sister, who has been banished by Odin's power these last centuries, threatens to return. If sparing that pathetic fool's life is the price, I will pay it."

“Your sister?! There’s a third one of you nutjobs?”

“Indeed. And that colourful moniker is perhaps one that is worthy of her. She is the Goddess of Death, Stark. Her return can only mean destruction, not just for Asgard, but for all the realms. Thor and Odin are needed, and so are my powers, if we have any hope of preventing this apocalypse.”

“That’s pretty big news, space boy. Are you sure you’re onboard with Thor and Odin on this one? I thought an apocalypse would be kinda your scene?”

“I tend to prefer the apocalypses I cause, or at the least survive. If there’s one thing I’m rather attached to it’s my own existence.”

“Well, that much checks out.”

Tony again studied him appraisingly.

“You need to help me do this, Stark, however much neither of us may want to. If you need reassurances, I will swear to the Norns, swear that once Odin and Thor are returned to Asgard I too will leave this world having harmed none here, including Strange.”

“Fair enough,” said Stark. “I’m not sure I subscribe to this fate hoodoo, but it certainly seems like it means something to you if you were willing to sit through everything Strange did to you. I can’t hide you here forever. But can we do it, without Strange and without your powers?”

“I think so, the foolish mortal didn’t really understand what he was doing, but from the runes he was casting I got the gist. If I tell you how to draw out the runes, the spell will draw on my power to work, but I shouldn’t actually need to “do” any magic myself.”

“Seems like a kinda tenuous distinction.”

“It’s my speciality” said Loki the ghost of a smile returning. Even with a broken tooth and beat up face, he didn’t half have a cute smile, Tony thought.

Tony looked on verge of being convinced.

“One more thing, what exactly is it that we need to do?”

“It’s easier than you might think, all the spell requires is submission. I, as the source of the power, need to submit to you, completely.”

Tony gulped.

“So that’s what this was all about? He just told me it was some kind of sex magic, and that it helps if things get a little rough. So he was trying to physically beat you into submission? How come it didn’t work?”

“I don’t know exactly, but first off he was going about it entirely the wrong way, he was trying to create “domination” as he called it. It wasn’t the right kind of power. Next off, he’s a cheap conjurer. He only has any power over me because I’m trapped by my own oath. If I hadn’t woven myself into my own web I would easily despatch that fool.”

“So you don’t respect him, so you don’t submit to him. Well how the hell am I supposed to do any better? You didn’t have a lot of respect for me when you flung me out of that window?”

Loki had the decency to look embarrassed.

“Ah,” he muttered, “I was expecting that might come up. Look, I’m sure Thor told you right about when he was explaining what a “good guy” I am. I do think, actually, just perhaps the influence of the mind stone meant that I took things a little far on my previous visit.”

“A little?” gasped Tony, incredulous.

“Yes, a little! We both know this pathetic world is crying out for me to lead it, that part I don’t deny for a moment, but I was accomplishing that just fine without Thanos and his accumulated hordes. Thor’s usually the one for raining down destruction from the heavens, I typically prefer a more subtle approach, without all the mess.”

“Thor rains down destruction from the heavens?”

“Yes, Stark, he’s not the spotless hero you all seem to think he is. But that’s not the point right now. Point is, we fought, whether or not I was in control of what I was doing, you defeated me. And as you said yourself, you know what that means in Asgard.”

“Yeah, I know, I have “rights” – I didn’t really think that was true, I was just saying it for effect...”

“It’s quite true, and lucky for us. I would not let any feeble mortal set hands on me, but there is justice in you taking what is rightfully yours.”

“Okay, okay, back up a minute. Strange tried all this and it didn’t work, I’m not him granted, but he tried it with me yesterday and it still didn’t work. Something isn’t right in this picture. Tell me everything Strange did to you.”

Loki took a deep breath, and told him. He started by describing their first encounter, then the episode with the enchanted whip. Then he ran through the beatings, the electrocution, the time Stephen had hung him upside down and choked him, Stephen’s attempts at humiliating him - bringing in a string of mortals for him to “service” before wiping their memories of the deed.

Tony sat in silence, his face turning an ashy shade of grey.

Loki tried hard to remain stoic during his recital, but as he got to the time that Strange had left him for what seemed like hours in what could only be described as a cramped box, blindfolded, chained and utterly alone, his voice began to crack and a single tear escaped, running down his cheek.

“I’m sorry,” said Tony, once it was clear Loki was done sharing. “He had no right to do that to you”.

Loki wasn’t too sure why Stark was apologising, but it really seemed like Stark was upset about this treatment of his enemy. It baffled Loki, but it also tugged at something buried deep inside him. He was grateful. Grateful for this mortal’s compassion.

“I’m sorry too that you had to relive all that, but it was useful. Basically everything he tried is what we don’t have to.”

Loki hesitated, the faintest prickle began across his skin.

“No, no, he was the problem, it might work with you!”

“Uh-uh.” Tony shook his head. “You want my help, we do this my way. Now first things first, swear the oath.”

Loki took a deep breath. The Midgardian adage “if you find yourself in a hole, stop digging”,

sprung to mind, but he pushed that thought aside.

“I swear to the Norns that when Odin and Thor are returned to Asgard, I will depart this realm and leave all of its inhabitants, including Strange, unharmed.”

Loki felt the tingling on his skin subside and a further thick layer of magic drape over him, but from Tony’s perspective nothing had happened

“Is that it?” he said, looking around like he was expecting something.

“Yes.”

“How do I know it’s worked?”

“You can’t, unless I try and break the oath, then you will see what it does to me, and that I cannot do it.”

“So I can only see if you really can’t harm anyone if you try and harm someone?”

Again, Tony looked sceptical, it was becoming a theme. He was a man of science, and too much magic always hurt his head. Loki simply nodded.

“Alright then, that’s what we better do.”

## Chapter 7

Loki looked confused as Tony led him down the spiral stairs into the workshop.

“Take a seat.”

Tony indicated a worktable rather than a chair and Loki dutifully hopped up.

“Just so you know, if you’re lying to me I’m gonna be really pissed. Not surprised in the slightest, but really, really pissed.”

Loki shrugged. That was fair enough.

“I’m not lying, Stark.”

“Oh, now I feel better! Why didn’t you say that before?” muttered Tony sarcastically, rummaging around in a large tool box. “Ah, ha!”

He emerged with a large pair of extremely sharp looking shears. Loki leaned back slightly, eyes wary.

“Relax,” said Tony, slipping the blade through the thin chains that connected Loki’s hands and collar and snipping them off in three places. The chains rattled to the ground, but the cuffs on his wrists and collar around his neck remained.

“I’d need something more heavy duty for those, we’ll have to deal with them later. Right now I need you to hit me.”

“What?”

“Hit me, come on, punch me, right in the face,” Tony leaned in closer, as if baiting him.

“I... I can’t Stark, I’ve sworn an oath not to harm anyone on this realm.”

“Try, I want you to show me what happens.”

Loki took a deep breath. This wasn’t going to be pleasant, but he had get to Tony onside, whatever it took. A feint wasn’t going to work, the oath would see through that so he really went for it, grasping a large wrench from the worktop and swinging it with all his might towards Tony’s face.

The more imminent the potential breach, the faster the oath seemed to react. Before he could complete the swing he was floored, blisters bubbling up across his hands and face like a plague. He needed to make this convincing so he forced himself to keep trying to get to Tony, crawling towards him, picturing strangling him with his bare hands. The pain was becoming overwhelming and he began to convulse on the floor, his eye’s rolling back as his vision blurred.

“Okay, okay, stop!” yelled Tony and Loki let the thought go.

The blisters subsided as quickly as they had come and the pain washed away, leaving Loki dishevelled but otherwise unharmed on the floor.

Tony studied him for a few moments.

“Look Reindeer Games, I’ll level with you. Here’s where I’m at. I don’t trust you. That was pretty

convincing, as was letting yourself go through all that stuff with the doc, but I still wouldn't be in the slightest surprised if this was all an act for some nefarious scheme of yours, or if this is just your idea of a good time. That said, the doc seemed pretty certain something bad was coming and much as I don't always like his methods, he's usually right. I'm not willing to send you back there, and that makes me responsible for what happens next. You say we need to do this spell Strange's been working on, I'll give it a go 'cos honestly I don't know what else to do with you and I need Thor back here so that you can be his problem."

Tony paused, as if waiting for a reaction. But Loki remained silent, looking up at him from the floor, so Tony continued.

"But first, I'm shattered. There's a guest suite down the hall. I'm gonna get Friday to lock the door behind you and she's gonna be watching over you, but there's food in there and I'll get some first aid supplies delivered. Eat, sleep, take a goddamn shower and we'll deal with this mess in the morning."

Tony waved vaguely towards a long corridor and Loki set off, pausing for a moment as he passed.

"Thanks, Stark," he said softly.

Tony simply nodded.

As he walked away he heard Tony muttering under his breath, "what the actual fuck is wrong with me, Friday? This is an unmitigatedly terrible idea."

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"The guest room is on your left, sir," said a disembodied voice emanating from somewhere around the ceiling. Loki pushed open the door and cautiously walked through. The door swung shut behind him and when he tried the handle, it didn't open again. The far wall was made of glass offering a breathtaking view across the city, but naturally there didn't look to be any way to open a window. And no one clad head to toe in titanium to break the glass with either, Loki thought. In fact, all the furniture looked built in. Loki started to suspect that he wasn't the first "guest" that wasn't to be trusted who had been kept here.

His first thought now he was alone was to remove as much of Strange's metalwork as possible. The butt plug was first to go, along with the cuffs on his wrists which, with some effort he was able to wriggle out of. Sadly, the silver loops around his ankles were clearly too tight to get over his feet, and the cock cage seemed to have no mechanism for removal at all. He would have to ask Stark to help with that. With a sigh Loki re-dressed himself.

As promised, there was a small kitchen with packets of dried food. He didn't recognise most of them until he came across an instant noodle pot. Pleased that Thor's penchant for Midgardian snacks had finally come in useful, he pressed the red button on the tap, which as he rightly guessed dispensed boiling water, and left the noodles to soften while he downed a can of soda.

With a "ding" a dumbwaiter opened up in the wall.

"Your supplies," announced Friday. Loki took out the lengths of bandages, plasters, ointments and a couple of jars of tablets and set them on the table. Bandages he understood, but he preferred to let his wounds heal in the air if possible. The jars displayed a long list of ingredients he didn't recognise and he didn't fancy putting his life in the hands of primitive Midgardian physicians, so he set those to one side for now. The ointments, however, he thought might be worth the risk.

The dumb waiter had also delivered two sets of clothing, one fresh nightwear, the other typical Midgardian garb – a pair of jeans, a black shirt, undergarments and socks. Loki found himself wondering if Stark had sent these, from his own wardrobe, or if Friday had thoughtfully added them.

He sat on the bed and gazed out at the city as he ate his noodles. Last time he had been here the sky had been fully of Chitauri soldiers, buildings crumbling before their onslaught, people screaming and running. A chaos which he controlled and from which he alone could deliver the weak masses of Midgard. How the mighty had fallen.

He meant what he had said to Stark. His purpose had been a worthy one, but he wasn't proud of his bargain with Thanos. That time too he had acted rashly, driven by jealousy without his usual degree of caution and cunning. Then there was the mind stone. He shivered at the memory of the blinding rage it had unleashed within him.

After that episode he had resolved to choose his allies better in future. Or better yet, not to need allies at all. Well that hadn't worked out. He badly needed Stark to work with him here, but it was going surprisingly well so far. Stark had removed his chains, agreed to help him in exchange for a relatively benign oath, and seemed to believe his story.

He ran himself a bath and sank slowly into the hot water. Days of sweat, grime and dried blood washed away in the warm water. Loki was one to take his moments of solace when he could get them and this was one. He had food, clothes, a comfy bed and he expected several hours peace to come up with a plan.

The weight of Strange's parting instructions hung heavy over him. He had done well so far and as long as his actions led him in the direction of fulfilling Strange's plan the sensation on his skin kept to a barely noticeable tingling. But he could feel the two oaths sitting unhappily next to each other, grating over each other like sandpaper. It was a dangerous game to go around making multiple unbreakable promises and the consequences should the two come into direct conflict didn't bear thinking about. Loki set this aside. The hard part was done. He had convinced Stark help him. Now he just had to work out how to make their attempt succeed.

## Chapter 8

When he woke the sun was high in the sky. He was even hungrier after the rest and made himself some more instant noodles. He got dressed into the jeans and shirt while they stewed. It had been a while since Loki had worn Midgardian garments and either fashioned had changed or these really were Stark's own clothes, as the trouser legs and sleeves came up several inches too short. Still, it was better than pyjamas and vastly superior to nudity.

Loki was still eating when Stark knocked at the door. He seemed amused at the sight of Loki in his too-small clothes, eating instant noodles, but Loki let that slide. He also saw Tony eyeball the plug and cuffs discarded on a side table, but noted that he said nothing.

"Morning, Bambi. You don't have to eat that crap. If you want to order take out, just ask Friday and she'll get something delivered. Hell, I do for every meal, you might as well."

Loki shrugged non-committally.

"So, what's the first step in this abracadabra business?"

Loki put aside his ramen bowl.

"You'll need something to write with, chalk will do."

"Got that Friday? Chalk."

"Yes, sir," and with a ding the dumb waiter popped open.

Loki set about explaining the runes. To avoid the magic prohibition, he didn't touch the chalk himself, instead guiding Tony on what he needed to draw. Writing out by hand, from line by line instructions, was significantly slower than Strange's arm waiving. Also Loki hadn't always been best placed to see the exact signs used, so sometimes he had to improvise and had Stark rub sections out two or three times before he was happy. They decided to place them throughout the penthouse, Loki tasting the air to choose the spots he thought would best conduct the necessary energy.

They had been at this for several hours when Stark called time out. "I didn't realise how long this shit was gonna take! You want pizza, it's basically dinner time?"

When the pizza arrived, Tony poured a drink for each of them too, leaving the bottle on the table beside his glass. They sat in silence for a few moments.

"So," said Tony at length, "what are we gonna do when the special squiggles are all done?"

"I rather think you have to tell me," Loki smirked.

Tony shifted uncomfortably.

"How will I know if it's working?"

"The runes should glow if it's working, like last time. The brighter they shine at any given time the more powerful the spell is. You may recall, when you slapped me they lit up, that gives you an idea."

"I'm gonna have to hurt you then," said Tony, not meeting Loki's eyes.

“Perhaps.”

A wrinkle appeared on Tony’s forehead.

“They were also pretty bright when I was fucking you.”

“Correct.”

“Was I hurting you then?”

Loki thought for a moment.

“No,” he said, truthfully.

A wave of relief flashed across Tony’s face and was quickly hidden.

“Have you got, y’know, any requests?”

“Requests?”

“Yeah, y’know, things you like, things you don’t like.”

Loki sighed. “This is not a date Stark, like Strange says, it doesn’t matter what I think, we just need to get this over and done with.”

“Alright, this is all business, understood.”

Stark fell quiet again.

Loki peered at him sideways, trying to read his expression. Was that just Stark’s turn of phrase, or had he actually thought there may be some other dimension to the situation?

Seeing how lost Tony looked, Loki relented.

“On Asgard, when one warrior defeats another but does not kill him, he has the right, as you know, to take what he wants from him. But he also might take him as a personal servant, have him perform tasks of a non-sexual nature, until his honour is restored.”

Tony brightened up slightly. “Role play? I’m the noble knight, you’re the squire boy who shines my armour and rubs my feet, and then we have a quickie in the stables?”

Loki looked horrified. “This is not a joke, Stark!”

“No, no, sorry, not role play, fine. But point taken, it's not all about the fucking.”

“Indeed,” then after several awkward moments, “I think the best way to see if the runes are adequate is to give them a go. Should we get started?”

Stark seemed hesitant.

“Let’s have another drink first,” he said, pouring himself a measure. From the level of the bottle, Loki realised Stark must have had several glasses while they had sat there.

Loki sighed again. This level of hesitation from Stark was not promising given the role he was supposed to play. If the tables had been turned, Loki wouldn’t have required Dutch courage. He wished Strange had instructed him to glamour himself before he departed. He was now well aware that Stark didn’t appreciate the used and abused aesthetic and clearly his appearance was less than

enticing.

Or perhaps Stark just didn't find him attractive at the best of times. When they had performed in front of Strange, Tony had said Loki looked good, beautiful even. Perhaps Tony had been trying to convince himself as much as anyone.

He had definitely enjoyed Loki's mouth though. Loki was fairly sure Stark's response to that hadn't been an act. He must have been imagining someone else, some beautiful Midgardian woman no doubt.

The flash of revulsion at this thought surprised even Loki. What did he expect? That Stark had spent the last few years fantasising about him too? It was ridiculous, but Stark's words during the penthouse illusion, and his heroic rescue, had lit something inside Loki that he couldn't properly describe or understand. But the tingling had started up on his skin. Evidentially the oath had the view that he wasn't doing enough to fulfil Strange's instructions.

Tony necked the large measure and poured another. Loki did the only thing he could think of doing to try and lessen the distastefulness of his appearance.

"Friday, lower the lights in here."

"Certainly, sir."

The lights dimmed to the equivalent of a soft candle light. The tingling was worsening. The last thing he needed to add to his unsightly look was blisters. What did the oath expect?

An idea came to, it turned his stomach, but Loki swallowed his distaste and lowered himself down onto one knee in front of Tony, careful to angle the good side of his face towards him.

"My liege, how may I assist you this evening? You have not had cause to use your armour today, but perhaps I may rub your feet?"

Tony paused for just a second to be sure Loki wasn't joking.

"Uh, yeah, okay." Tony leaned back against the sofa, drink in hand and let Loki get to work.

"Mmm, that's good," Tony murmured after a few minutes, his head flopped back, eyes closed. "Oh yeah, you are great at this."

Loki couldn't quite bring himself to be insulted by this praise, and the oath clearly liked his performance too as the tingling subsided. Loki brought his massage further up Stark's body, digging his hands in firmly. The drink seemed to be kicking in, as Tony let a low moan leave his lips without a hint of the earlier embarrassment.

"C'mere," he whispered, pulling Loki towards him.

Planting a kiss on Loki's mouth he pushed him down onto the sofa, leaning over on top of him. The taste of whiskey as Tony thrust his tongue into Loki's mouth mixing with the heavy scent of his cologne was overpowering. Loki kissed him back, Tony's enthusiasm contagious.

Stark trailed kisses down Loki's neck, running his hands over him, finding the buttons of his shirt and ripping them open, his kisses continuing down his chest to his stomach. Most of Loki's vision was taken up with his own tousled hair falling across his face, but out of the corner of his eye the room began to illuminate with a steady orange glow.

Stark seemed to notice the glowing too and it reminded him of the purpose of their activities.

“Take your clothes off and get back on your knees,” he whispered, climbing off Loki and walking over to the far side of the lounge.

Loki scrambled off the sofa, pulling the jeans off to join the shirt where Tony had discarded it on the floor. Tony hadn’t been clear about the underwear but Loki assumed this fell within the definition of “clothes” so he took it off too, before falling to a kneeling position in front of the sofa.

He watched Tony press against a smooth panel in the wall, which sprang forward to reveal a hidden cabinet. How very like Stark, Loki thought, to have a hidden cabinet of what he assumed were going to be sex toys in his living room. Tony took out just one small item and paced back slowly, his self-consciousness gone in the face of whiskey and want.

Loki felt Stark’s warmth breath on his neck, as a soft blindfold was slipped gently over his eyes. If Tony still felt hesitant, Loki now couldn’t see it and it certainly didn’t show in his voice, which was low and loaded with desire.

“You look so beautiful,” he hissed, close to Loki’s ear, sending a shiver down his spine, “waiting for me, on my floor, mine to do what I want with.”

Pacing around him, he pushed Loki’s knees apart. Loki could sense he was looking at the cock cage.

“I’d forgotten about this,” Stark said, reaching down to run a finger across the shiny metal. “It kinda suits you, I’ll be honest, but if you’re very good today, I might just take it off for you. Would you like that?”

“Yes!” Loki answered quickly.

“Yes what?”

“Yes please, my liege, I would like that very much,” Loki quickly corrected, catching Tony’s meaning immediately.

“Better,” said Tony, approval seeming to radiate from him. “Now, I want to feel your mouth again.”

Loki hastily obliged. Remembering Tony’s preference that he didn’t use his hands, he kept them behind his back as he swirled his tongue along Tony’s cock, before taking the whole thing into his mouth. He couldn’t see Stark’s reaction, but the stiffening shaft in his mouth and Tony’s shaking breath told him all he needed to know.

He kept an eye on the orange glow along the edges of the blindfold as he came up for air. It wasn’t getting stronger, it might even be fading. Tony hadn’t seemed to notice, fully occupied with his own pleasure.

Loki took a gamble and picked up Stark’s hand from where it rested on the sofa. Guiding Tony’s fingers to the back of his neck, he encouraged Tony to take control. Perhaps remembering the “business” nature of the engagement, even through his whiskey-haze, Stark seemed to get the hint. He wrapped his fingers into Loki’s hair and pulled him forward, forcing his cock down Loki’s throat. Loki tried not to fight it. His every instinct was to struggle and pull away, but he forced himself to hold still as Stark thrust deeply until he spilled into him.

Tony’s grip relaxed, letting Loki slip back to rest against his leg. Tony’s fingers gently stroked

through Loki's hair as he got his breath back. The blindfold was slipped off and neither of them spoke for a minute or so as the warm orange glow slowly dwindled and went out.

"Thanks, I guess," said Tony finally.

Safe in the knowledge that Tony couldn't see his face, Loki rolled his eyes.

"Perhaps some more practical gratitude could be in order?"

"Oh, yeah, I did say I'd take that thing off you."

A "bing" from across the room grabbed Tony's attention.

"Look, I'm sorry, I've got to get that. I'll sort you out tomorrow I promise. Go back to your room."

Loki sighed, but gathered up his clothes and headed down the stairs to the guest suite. With a dull clunk Friday locked the door behind him.

Loki sat for a long time before sleeping. He hadn't been able to see properly through the blindfold, but he had the nagging feeling that the orange glow had been weaker than last time. Either he hadn't done the runes well enough or his and Tony's session hadn't been up to scratch. Maybe both. The runes he wasn't too worried about, he could probably get Tony to spend a few more hours on them tomorrow before he got bored.

Getting Stark to play his role was looking to be more of a challenge. Tony had eventually got into it, but it had taken more than half a bottle of liquor and a cringe-worthy display from Loki. And even then, they had been, what, making out on the sofa like teenagers? Every step to push things further Loki had to direct. For a spell that required submission, things weren't looking promising. As if on cue, Loki felt the barest tingling along the backs of his arms.

"I'm doing my best," he muttered, "give me a chance!"

But it wasn't just the tingling that was keeping him up. He couldn't quite put a name on the feeling. Loneliness? Sadness? Both were true, but neither seemed quite right. Rejection? Tony had called him beautiful, he had not just used him, he had kissed him. He was pleased that Strange had never kissed him on the mouth like that. But with Tony's lips on his, just for a fraction of a moment, he had forgotten that he was here unwillingly and he was back in the pathetic fantasies he had had about Tony during his imprisonment in Asgard. Tony kissing him, he hardly believed it had really happened. Then after it was over Stark had answered the phone and dismissed him.

What else did he expect? To be invited in curl up with Stark on the sofa? In his bed? He knew how repulsive Tony found the marks on his body, how he had needed half a bottle of whiskey to prepare himself to even let Loki suck his cock. He must have eventually drunk enough to be able to blur Loki from his mind. Perhaps obscuring his face with the blindfold had helped too.

Who was Stark imagining when he called Loki beautiful, when he pressed him down under those passionate kisses? The thoughts rattled around Loki's mind until he finally fell asleep.

## Chapter 9

Loki woke up earlier this time, it was still morning. He soaked in the bath for a while, then ate, but Stark did not appear and the door remained locked. The tingling along his arms had grown only slightly overnight. It was not painful, but it was enough to prevent him going back to sleep.

“Friday, call Stark,” Loki said eventually.

“Certainly, sir.”

“What?” came Tony’s voice immediately. He sounded bleary, like he had just woken up.

“Morning, Stark. I was hoping we could, y’know, get on with things today?”

“Eh, what, oh, right, yeah, gimme five minutes. Friday, bring him up.”

The door lock clicked and Loki headed out. Even this small action towards his goal reduced the tingling a little, for which he was grateful.

He passed several closed doors on his way up to the penthouse lounge. He thought about taking a look, but assumed Friday was watching him. It took a few more minutes for Tony to emerge, holding a mug of coffee.

“Okay Lokes, how’s it going?”

Loki ignored the nickname and set about instructing Tony on improving the runes. As they worked Loki caught Tony watching him out of the corner of his eye. When Loki’s eye caught him, did Tony flush slightly? Loki shook it out of his mind and focussed on the task.

“I think that’s good enough,” said Loki after a while.

“Alright,” said Tony. “Look, I know we need to try harder on the spell. I’ve got some ideas, but also some work I need to finish up, perhaps you could y’know make us some food or something.”

Loki opened his mouth to tell Stark where to go with that request, when he remembered that if Stark wanted food he just ordered takeaway. It wasn’t just that he wanted food, he wanted Loki to make it for him. Fine, he thought. If that’s how Stark wanted to start off, he’d go along with it.

“Of course,” he said, turning towards the kitchen, then after just the slightest pause, “sir.”

He swore he heard a sharp intake of breath, but when he glanced back, Tony was paying him no attention, opening up his laptop and taking a seat at the desk.

Loki didn’t really know how to cook, but nor did Tony have much food available. He spent a few minutes looking through the cupboards before finding several trays of some kind of canapé in the freezer which, following a little advice from Friday, he put in the oven. He also stumbled across another bar. Were two bars in one room really necessary? Here Loki felt slightly more at home and he started mixing up a gin martini.

A ping sounded next to Loki’s ear.

“Mr Stark asked me to provide you something more appropriate to wear,” came Friday’s voice.

Loki looked over at Tony, but he still looked engrossed in his work.

“You’ll find your clothes in the guest suite.”

Loki dutifully headed-off, glancing at Tony as he passed, who seemed completely oblivious to his presence. He took off the jeans and shirt as soon as he got back to the bedroom. He had a sinking feeling that he might not like what Stark had chosen (or was it Friday’s choice?), but he was going to have to force himself to wear it regardless. If dressing up and playing servant was what it took to get his powers back, he would do it.

Looking at himself in the mirror it wasn’t as bad as Loki feared. At least the clothes fit him properly, unlike the too short jeans and shirt. Loki had been provided with tight fitting black trousers and a sheer black shirt made of a fine, translucent mesh. It buttoned only to a deep V and it was clear that the cuffs were intended to be rolled half way up the fore arms, which Loki did. Perhaps this was Stark’s way of getting him to show some skin, while still hiding the worst of the lash marks under the gauzy fabric.

He spent a few moments trying to get his hair under control, it was still soft and fluffy from his bath that morning. Not wanting to let the food burn. He hurried back to the kitchen. Stark still seemed to be paying him no attention, but Loki could see his reflection in the laptop screen, eyeing him sideways. Loki covered up a small smile by dipping down to lift the appetisers out of the oven. He arranged them on a platter he had found, together with the martini and headed over to Stark. He had never acted as a servant before, but he had spent plenty of time in palaces to know he should wait politely behind Stark’s chair to be called over.

Stark didn’t make him wait long.

“Come on then Bambi, let’s see how you’ve done.”

Loki placed the martini to Stark’s right, then realising he hadn’t brought any plate or cutlery for Stark to eat with, tried to conceal his mistake by dropping to one knee and holding out the platter towards Tony, as if he had always intended to hold it for him while he ate.

Reaching for a vol-au-vent and taking in Loki properly for the first time, Tony exhaled loudly.

“Wowzas Reindeer Games, you scrub up pretty nice.”

Loki bowed his head and bit his lip to hide another small smile.

“Thank you, sir.”

Even with his eyes down, Loki was sure Stark reacted again to that term of address, tensing ever so minutely. Loki stored that information for later.

Tony put two fingers under Loki’s chin guiding his head up. One of his signature moves, it seemed. He took a slow sip of the drink and licked his lips as he eyed Loki hungrily. Something fluttered in Loki’s stomach.

“I said I’d do something for you if you were good, didn’t I? Have you been good, Bambi?”

Loki cringed internally at the nickname, but if Tony was going to take the restricting cage off him he was enjoying the direction this was going.

“Yes, sir,” he replied quickly.

“And are you going to keep being good for me?”

“Yes, sir.”

Tony took another morsel off the tray, unhurried.

“Okay then, you can put the tray down, and follow me to the workshop.”

Loki set the tray on the desk and made to stand, but Tony put a hand lightly on his shoulder to stop him.

“You can crawl,” he said simply.

“I hardly...” Loki started indignantly, without thinking. He stopped almost immediately, biting his lip again, but the damage was done.

“Got something to say, Bambi?”

“No, sir,” said Loki quickly.

“Sounds like you need a little help holding your tongue, and not for the first time.”

Tony headed over to the secret cabinet and pulled out something small. As he strode back Loki realised it was a muzzle, the same as the one Thor had put on him in this very room after he had been defeated by the Avengers. Why did Tony have such an item? And among his adult entertainment supplies? Perhaps Stark hadn’t been joking when he said that he had imagined the events of that day with a different ending? Loki pushed the thought away quickly, but not before his face had flushed slightly. Tony didn’t seem to notice and with a smooth motion he pressed the muzzle to Loki’s face. It snapped into place. Like old times, Loki thought ruefully.

“Better,” said Stark. “C’mon then.”

He strode purposefully towards the spiral stairs, illuminated by a dull orange glow from the runes. Loki dropped forward onto hands and knees and crawled along behind him. Tony didn’t turn back or make any suggestion that he cared whether or not Loki was following him, but Loki could see his eyes darting sideways, watching Loki in the reflections of the long windows that framed the room.

Getting down the spiral stairs on his hands and knees wasn’t graceful and Loki was pleased Tony was at least pretending not to look at him as he finally arrived in the workshop.

“Hop up.” Tony indicated the workbench. “Pants off and lie back.”

Loki obeyed.

“Now,” muttered Stark, as if to himself, “we need to be careful, can’t have you wriggling around too much, don’t want to damage anything, uhm, important.”

His eyes raked over Loki, who shrank back as far as he could into the worktop, feeling exposed under the bright lights. Tony lifted up Loki’s arms and snapped them into restraints at the head of the workbench. He did the same for Loki’s feet at the bottom. Loki didn’t remember the workbench having restraints yesterday, and wondered if Tony had added them overnight for this purpose. Certainly they were suspiciously well-placed for Loki’s height, unless Tony was in the habit of tying tall men to his table. There were straps under the workbench as well, which Tony brought around and fastened across Loki’s chest, his stomach and his thighs. The straps pulled tight, securing Loki firmly in place.

Then Tony turned his attention to the cage itself, stroking the silver metal, sliding his finger under the bars, tugging to assess how much give was available. Loki burned with embarrassment and squeezed his eyes shut. He willed his cock not to respond to Tony's attentions, but he could already feel it swelling into the cage as Tony's fingers manipulated the metal casing.

"That's not going to make this easier, Lokes," Tony said with a slight chuckle. "Just a little target practice first, it's been a while since I used this."

Very reassuring, Loki thought, as Tony waved a small electric saw in front of his eyes. Loki heard the motor buzz into life, but Tony didn't immediately start on the cage. First he delicately sliced off the remaining cuffs around Loki's ankles and let them clatter onto the workbench.

"Not bad, just like riding a bike. Hold still, yeah."

Loki froze, eyes shut, not even breathing as Tony brought the saw down against the cage.

"There you go!" said Tony, proudly after just a few tense moments. He slid his fingers under the now fractured metal and prised the cage open. Loki let out a deep sigh of relief.

"What do you say to that?" asked Tony.

Loki tried to say "thank you, sir," but through the muzzle it came out only as a muffled whisper.

"Yeah, that's what I thought."

Tony hadn't taken his hands away from Loki's cock. He now slid a hand under Loki's balls too, cupping them and fondling gently.

"Doesn't seem to have done any permanent damage," he said, with a slow drag down Loki's rapidly stiffening shaft.

"A bet it's been a while hasn't it Bambi? Who knows how long Stephen's had you locked up like that. Did he ever let you out? Ever let you come?"

Tony seemed to want an answer and so Loki shook his head, eyes on Tony's. Tony smiled.

"Would you like to come now?"

Loki nodded. The sheer relief of being free of the cage, and Tony not having sliced his cock off in the process, had dulled some of his earlier embarrassment. Now that Tony had finished the technical work, he had also turned off the bright light that had glared down on Loki and the room was bathed instead in the more forgiving steady orange glow of the runes.

Loki moaned gently as Tony began sliding a hand over his cock rhythmically. His breathing quickened behind the muzzle. He let his head fall back, eyes closed, his fingers and toes curling, the only parts of his body he could move free of the restraints. His breathing becoming irregular as the fire inside him built, as he came closer to the brink, entirely at Tony's mercy.

All at once Tony took his hands away. Loki whined through the gag and snapped his eyes open, the need written all over his face. Tony cupped his balls in one hand and pulled gently.

"You don't think you get to come first do you? You need to realise your place here Bambi or I'll have to put the cage back on." As he spoke, in one smooth and seemingly practised motion, he slid back Loki's restrained legs wide and the end of the worktop folded down. One slicked up finger began circling Loki's now exposed entrance. It slid inside him. It wasn't as good as the hand on his

cock, but right now he would take it. He moaned and used what little motion he had to press his body down to meet Tony's finger.

"Yes, that's good, so keen for my cock inside you aren't you?"

Loki didn't know if this required a response, but, just in case, he moaned enthusiastically as Tony slid in a second finger, stretching him open. Tony fumbled with his clothing with his other hand and after only a few moments was pressing the head of his slicked up cock against Loki's entrance.

Tony could see the bruises on Loki's skin this time, the outlines of Strange's fingers still emblazoned in purple, and perhaps that was why his hands slid to Loki's thighs rather than his hips.

Tony started off slow and gentle, as he had been last time, but Loki could tell he was struggling to hold himself back. Loki needed the time to adjust to Stark's thick length, but he was also desperate for Stark to get on with it, hovering at the edge of his own climax. He moaned again, locking eyes with Tony and nodding encouragingly. This was all the persuasion Tony needed and he let himself go, ploughing into Loki, thrusting deep and fast.

Loki's body had responded involuntarily to this kind of treatment before, but now, actually turned on, rather than just terrified, it felt wonderful, the pleasure of it coursing through his entire body. But Tony had been clear that he shouldn't come first, Loki held his breath trying to hold back. Fortunately he didn't have to wait long before Tony buried himself deeply and spilled into him. Tony only had to graze his fingers a couple of times over Loki's straining cock for him to follow.

## Chapter 10

The next few days passed much the same. In the mornings, Tony and Loki worked together on refining the runes. Tony was definitely loosening up around him. The first day their conversation had consisted of Loki telling Tony what to draw and very little else. Now Tony was chatting freely, about what he was building in the workshop, about the day to day business of his company.

He wanted to know about Loki too. He avoided asking him too much about his visits to Earth – both the previous one and this one likely too emotive subjects for rather different reasons, but he wanted to know everything he could about life on Asgard. It had been a long time since someone had been genuinely interested in what Loki had had to say. Of course, in the years posing as Odin he had commanded the respect of all of Asgard and never wanted for a willing audience. But he had an act to maintain, in all that time he had never been able to speak freely, for fear he would be discovered. Conversations with the Allfather were also a rather one way affair, and although Loki was never one to tire of his own voice, Tony's questions and genuine interest in what he had to say were refreshing.

The rest of the day, Tony was in charge. He set Loki tasks to complete around the penthouse, usually acting as Tony's butler or servant, with outfits to match. Loki didn't much like cooking and doing chores, but when it earned him appreciation from Tony, it no longer felt like too much of a hardship. Tony was also no longer afraid to take a lead in their activities. They'd gone through almost all of the contents of Tony's secret toy cupboard and even had a few new items delivered to try. The one thing Tony hadn't used on Loki was the multi-tailed flogger. Loki had tried to explain to Stark that this was really nothing like the enchanted whip Strange had used on him, but Stark's horror at the lash marks won over and he told Loki definitively there was to be no whipping.

Tony was happy to do other things that Loki would generally have described as painful and degrading. But somehow, with Tony, Loki didn't find those words were quite the right fit. Tony also refused to properly injure Loki. Loki had managed to get Tony on board with restraining him, stripping him and beating him, whether because Loki had got some part of his assigned tasks wrong, or just because Stark felt like it. But it was nothing like the brutal punishments he had received from Strange. Tony would start off gently and build up the sensation. He would tease Loki with light touches, make him beg to be hit harder. Sometimes tears escaped Loki's eyes, but more often these came when it was over, as Tony kissed and rubbed Loki's marked flesh and whispered to him how good he had been, how impressed he was with how he had taken his punishment.

Loki started slipping in little mistakes every now and then. He told himself this was to try and push Stark into making the spell more powerful. He tried not to admit to himself that he craved Tony's soft words and touches after his punishment was done. Tony didn't dismiss him immediately any more either. Usually they sat together on the sofa, had dinner, watched TV, until they eventually went to their respective bedrooms.

Loki couldn't deny that there were some things he was enjoying about his time at the penthouse. His interest in Tony hadn't faded with time. If anything, the more he knew about this hero, the more captivated he became. He badly wanted his powers back, but apart from that, if it hadn't been for the oath, Loki would have been in no hurry to end his stay.

But the orange light wasn't growing, and with each day that the spell didn't work, the prickling of his skin was worsened. The ache was constant now. It waxed and waned, but it never disappeared. It kept him awake at night and he fidgeted at his skin irritably.

He had seen Tony notice as well. When it spiked and he flinched involuntarily, Tony looked at him uncertain. If Tony thought that this was a sign that Loki was trying to break the rules, trying to use magic, perhaps even trying to hurt him, he didn't show it. If anything Tony seemed worried about Loki.

Loki was worried about himself. What would happen if the pain kept on growing? Would Strange eventually stop this? Or would he just let Loki keep suffering until, until what? Until his skin blistered from his body? Could someone die of pain? He shuddered. He needed to push Stark. He'd encouraged him before, but he need to force Stark to really take charge. He wasn't looking forward to it, but it had to be done, and he had to choose his moment.

Tony had set Loki the job of cleaning the workshop. He had provided an extremely snugly fitting set of "overalls" for this task. Loki didn't question Stark's choices for his attire. If it pleased Stark, he approved of it, and he just tried not to walk past any mirrors.

Loki had been cleaning diligently for most of the morning. Stark was constructing something in the corner of the workshop, occasionally glancing over at Loki. This seemed like as good a time as any, perhaps even a better time than some, as Stark had been drinking steadily since lunchtime. A tippie usually loosened him up in his treatment of Loki. Loki made sure his glass remained full, topping it up whenever Stark looked away.

Since Loki had decided to implement his plan, the pain has subsided to a buzzing on his skin, but clearly the oath knew he was stalling because it was starting to intensify again.

While Stark had his back turned, he picked up a large glass bulb and hurled it with force into the concrete floor. It broke with a satisfying crash that snapped Tony's attention away from his work. Loki immediately fell to his knees, regardless of the broken glass around him.

"I'm sorry, sir," he blurted out, head down.

Tony put down his work, unhurried and strolled over.

"Now then Bambi, you know what happens when you're not careful with your tasks don't you?"

"Yes, sir, I get punished."

"Yes, and this is your second mistake today. You thought I didn't notice, but I saw you spill those nails everywhere and sweep half of them under the cupboard rather than gather them up. You're getting sloppy Bambi, it's not good enough."

"I'm sorry, sir," Loki repeated, sneaking a glance up at Tony. Although he way trying to put on a serious face, Stark was definitely fighting a smile. Topsy fun-ishment Tony was not going to be good enough, but it would at least get them in the right set up.

Tony grabbed Loki by the collar and hauled him roughly to his feet.

"Upstairs!" he barked.

Loki hastily scrambled up.

"Friday, get the new additions ready," said Starkly calmly when he reached the top of the stairs. Two chains unfurled themselves from the ceiling by the windows, and covers on the floor slid back, revealing anchor points.

"Strip," ordered Stark, not looking round. Loki complied immediately.

Stark laid a hand on Loki's shoulder and walked him over to the window. He clipped his wrists into the chains that hung from the ceiling and his ankles into the points on the floor.

"Up a little, Friday."

The wrist chains shortened so Loki was forced to stand on his tiptoes, naked and facing the long windows. Stark ran his hands slowly, lingeringly over Loki's stretched out body. He felt Stark's warmth drink-laden breath nuzzle into his neck, arms wrapping around him. Just watching him displayed like this was turning Tony on. As much as Loki enjoyed this validation, it would be no good for his plan if Stark in his inebriated state decided to bypass the punishment to get his kicks quicker.

"I thought I was to be punished, Stark," he spat, "not snuggled."

"Don't worry Bambi, I've not forgotten. And I'm sure you know it, but that's extra for forgetting how to address me properly."

Stark strolled over to the secret cupboard. Loki held his breath – if he'd taken the backchat too far and Stark had gone to get the muzzle, this would all have been for nothing. But he need not have worried. The reflection in the window showed Tony heading back, in his hands a long, thin cane. Won't whip me, Loki thought to himself, but will hit me with that. He failed to see the conceptual difference.

"Alright Bambi, that's two for the nails, two for the lightbulb, two for your lack of respect, and two just because I feel like it. Ready?"

Without waiting for a response, Tony swung the cane sharply into the backs of Loki's thighs. Loki jumped and let out a strangled gasp. Five more blows followed in quick succession. Now the element of surprise was gone, Loki could easily handle the pain and took them with just a soft grunt.

Tony paused.

His fingers settled on the inside of Loki's leg, sliding up toward his crotch, teasing.

"Are you ready to apologise?"

Loki was so ready.

Ready to say "yes, sir" and "sorry, sir" and savour the last two hits before taking Tony's cock into his mouth or being bent over the sofa. He was ready to feel skin on skin, to be enveloped in the desire radiating from Tony. He was ready to be held when it was over and be told how good he was, how pleased Tony was with him. But he couldn't do that. He had to try and get Tony to break him, and to do that, he had to break Tony. Loki's insides squirmed at the thought.

"No," he said simply.

"No?" echoed Stark, surprised.

"No. I won't apologise to you. You, pathetic mortal, should be the one apologising to me, begging for my forgiveness. When my powers are restored, I will destroy you."

Loki intended for it to sound threatening, but Tony clearly took it as playful.

"Getting back to your old self are you, Reindeer Games? If that's how you want it." Tony swung

the cane hard into Loki's backside. The runes flickered, but the brightness barely grew.

"Nice view from this window, Stark. Did you think that as I threw you out of it? Next time I do it, I'll make sure there's no suit to save you."

Tony hesitated. He clearly still thought Loki was playing, trying to get a rise out of him, but since their first conversation on arrival at the penthouse, neither of them had mentioned the events of that day. Tony decided to go along with it anyway.

"You just don't know what's good for you do you, Lokes," he replied, slamming the cane into Loki's ass three more times.

Loki screwed up his face, clenching his teeth. Tony was hitting him harder than usual, likely a combination of his inebriated state and Loki's provocations, but the effect on the spell was minimal.

Loki was struggling, he was baiting Tony as best he could, but he could tell Stark thought this was all part of the game. His mindset wasn't changing, so neither was the spell. He had to up the stakes.

"Next time, I'll throw that pretty secretary of yours out first. I'll make sure you can hear her screaming for you to save her, see her fragile little body smashing on the pavement."

The words came easily to his lips, but his stomach sank as he pictured Tony's face. He was glad he was facing away, and he kept his eyes down to avoid catching Stark's reflection. He braced for a blow, but nothing came.

"Okay, I don't know what's got into you today, but too far. Friday, release him. Put some fucking clothes on."

Loki was dropped unceremoniously to the floor, the chains retracting. He scrambled up, pulling on his discarded garments. When he dared to look around Tony had turned away from him, leaning against the kitchen counter.

Loki's heart sank. But he needed to keep on twisting the knife. He strode over and grabbed Tony by the neck. Their eyes met and it took everything Loki had to keep going.

"What's the matter, Stark, you think I'm joking? You think I'm here because I'm trapped by that pathetic conjuror Strange or by my oaf of a brother? As if either of them could control me! You should have trusted your instincts that this was all part of my greater design. Or did you think I actually want to be here with you? Have you got a little crush on me, Stark? As if a god like me, could be interested in someone like you. Pathetic."

Tony hadn't even tried to pull away from the grip around his neck. His eyes were wide, Loki hoped with panic, fear, anger, some emotion that would spark the reaction he needed, but what he saw was confusion. Why was Tony making this so damn hard?

"Had you forgotten how I tore apart this city, killed eighty people in two days? Your petty human lives mean nothing to me. This world is only fit to be my plaything. I am a god and this world will worship me. They will fall in line or they will die, like your pathetic little friend Paul Coleman, or whatever his name was. I didn't need to kill him you know, but he was pitiful, useless, a bug in my way, and I enjoyed squishing him, watching the life seep out of him. Just like I will with you."

Loki had finally found the right button.

“His name,” Stark yelled, finally wrenching free of Loki’s grip and bring his fist around to meet Loki’s face, “was Phil Coulson.”

The fist connected with Loki’s eye socket, he didn’t even try to dodge. He was thrown sideways, but he used the momentum to reach out and push Tony backwards. Stumbling to find his footing, Tony’s hand swept across the bar, settling on a half-empty bottle. He swung it round, smashing it over Loki’s head. The glass shattered, blood splaying down Loki’s cheek.

Momentarily stunned, Tony took the opportunity to kick Loki hard in the stomach and he crumpled to the floor. Tony kicked him again, throwing him onto his back. He fell on top of Loki, slamming his fists into him over and over. Loki didn’t try to fight back, he just lay there, shielding his bloodied face as best he could, and waited for it to end.

So that was it, he thought, as the world started to go hazy. That was what it took for Tony Stark to remember who Loki really was. Everything started to turn orange, but he didn’t know if the spell was working or if it was the mix of blood and tears in his eyes.

“Sir,” came a woman’s voice, “you can stop now, he’s about to lose consciousness.”

Through his haze, Loki realised it was Friday. Odd, he thought, she usually spoke when spoken to. The interruption also seemed to break Stark out of his rage. He sat back on Loki’s hips where he had been straddled over him. Loki could only half-open one eye. Tony looked down at him in horror, as if suddenly sober and seeing him for the first time. Hands grabbed at his collar and shook him.

“Loki!” Stark yelled, but he didn’t seem angry now, he seemed scared. “Why aren’t you fighting me?”

Loki opened his mouth and drew a shuddering breath, but that was all that he could manage. Tony’s grip slackened on his collar, letting him drop. Tony scrambled away, backwards across the floor until he came to rest slumped against the bar.

Loki gazed at the ceiling, his eyes going in and out of focus. He had no idea how much time passed. With an excruciating pain that made him wince, he rolled his head to the side to look at Tony. He was staring back at Loki, his face still the picture of horror.

“Loki, why didn’t you hit me?” Loki realised Stark was using his real name again. He’d only done that once before, when he had wanted to know the truth about whether he had really injured Loki in Strange’s illusion. Well there wasn’t any question about that now.

Loki ignored Tony’s question. “Did it work?” he whispered finally.

“Work?” asked Stark, confused. Then looking around, the orange light fading, “no, Lokes, I don’t think it did, it got really bright, blinding, but now its fading just the same as always. You... you did that for the spell?”

Loki nodded.

“None of that was true? You said that so I that I would... hurt you, like he did?”

Loki nodded again.

“I... Lokes, I...” but it seemed that for once, Tony Stark didn’t know what to say.

## Chapter 11

They sat in silence for a few minutes. Loki stared at the ceiling, blood-stained tears making their way down his face. Finally Tony spoke.

“Friday, does he need an ambulance?”

Friday pinged into action, a green light appearing from somewhere in the ceiling and scanning Loki.

“Mr Laufeyson has two broken ribs, severe bruising to the face, neck and stomach and multiple lacerations. He is in no immediate danger, but he requires significant medical care.”

“Christ Friday, call a doctor”

“No!” interrupted Loki. “I’ll be fine, I heal quickly, please, no one can know I am here, you know that.”

Tony looked uncertain.

“Just help me downstairs, bring me some medical supplies. I can take care of myself.”

Tony seemed in too much shock to contradict him. Loki expected Tony to come over and help him up, but instead one of the robots appeared, carefully lifted Loki and took him down to the guest suite. As he went down the stairs out of sight, the last thing he saw was Tony, still leaned up against the bar, silently holding his head in his hands.

Loki dragged himself into the bathroom, where Friday had delivered the medical supplies. She binged into life, talking Loki step by step through sterilising his wounds and wrapping them. It was slow progress. Every move Loki made sent fresh waves of pain through his battered body. At last he climbed into the soft bed. The cane marks, although by far the least of his injuries, made it painful to lie on his back, so he ended up on his side, wheezing softly.

Until now he had focussed on his physical injuries. He had not had time to think about the implications of what had happened.

He had baited Tony, waiting until he was drunk, worse, he had got him drunk, so Tony wouldn’t see through the flimsy pretence. He had said the most hurtful things he could think of, and Tony had taken that bait. This was what he wanted to happen. What he needed to happen. What more had he expected? Had he wanted Tony to see through his charade? Had he expected that Tony’s, what - fondness for him? desire to fuck him? - would mean Tony wouldn’t believe he could say such things and mean them. What he’d said had been true. He had killed the man, Coulson, although in reality he had remembered his name. But he didn’t know the names of all the others, the lives lost in his failed invasion attempt. That had been him, his doing. The mind stone may have exacerbated things, but it only amplified what it already found. Loki’s own desire for power, for recognition, for respect, at any cost. He had thrown Tony out of the window, and if Pepper had been there, he wouldn’t have had a second thought about doing the same to her. Why shouldn’t Tony have believed that all this time Loki was simply waiting for his moment to attack?

But the plan had failed, it hadn’t been powerful enough. What would Tony do with him now? Tony was a hero. He believed Strange that a danger was coming and he would want to protect Midgard, but after this surely he wouldn’t keep working on the spell with Loki? Even if Tony were willing, what would they do? They had tried everything. This had been Loki’s last chance. Tony

had lost control, he had overpowered Loki and Loki had laid there and taken it. It had got them close, but it wasn't enough. Loki had played his hand now, he couldn't trick Tony the same way again.

There was only one logical course of action now. Tony would return him Strange. Strange, who would keep trying to break Loki until he killed him.

Loki felt numb.

Eventually he fell asleep.

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The next few days Loki hardly moved from the bed. Friday had the robot bring him protein shakes with a straw. The shakes made him sleepy and his pain ebb away. He realised they must be laced with some heavy duty painkillers, but he didn't refuse them. They made the time pass quicker and they also made it harder to think straight which was a welcome relief.

When their effects began to wear off, Loki thought about Tony. About the hurt in his eyes as Loki had listed off his crimes, as he had bragged about the further atrocities he would commit. Then the anger as he pounded his fists into Loki's face.

A few weeks ago, this is exactly what he would have expected had he ever come face to face with Tony Stark again. But really his time with Tony had been so different from expectations. Tony had saved him from Strange, for reasons he still couldn't fathom. He had made Loki his problem. Yes, he was trying to save Midgard but he could have just let Strange do that. He had intervened to help Loki when he hadn't needed to. Loki couldn't remember the last time that someone had done that for him. He had always known it was too good to last, but he had wished it could have ended without him having to put that hurt in Tony's eyes.

To add insult to injury, the oath had clearly decided that he had sat around long enough and the pain on his skin had started again in earnest. It clawed at his nerves, unrelenting.

"What do you want from me!" yelled Loki to the empty room. "What more can I do?"

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Loki had healed enough to be able to move around the guest suite, to make his own food and no longer take the drugged shakes. He had started showering again, and dressing himself.

He heard a gentle knock at the door.

"Come in."

Tony pushed open the door slowly, and stepped inside.

"Hi," he said at last.

"Good morning, sir." Loki didn't look up.

"You can stop that, please, just call me Tony."

"As you wish."

The silence hung heavy.

"Lokes, look, I'm sorry."

Loki let this hang in the air too. Tony had left him alone, injured for who knows how many days. He wasn't going to make it that easy.

"I can't believe I didn't see what you were doing. I'm an idiot. I'm worse than an idiot, I'm a horrible person. I mean, I even made you take an oath you wouldn't hurt anyone. Of course you were doing it for the spell. Loki, can you forgive me?"

Loki glanced up through his hair, looking at Tony for the first time since he had entered the room. He looked tired, and utterly broken. Loki's resolve melted away.

"Tony, you have nothing to apologise for. I didn't mean what I said, but I did do those things. I'm not proud of it, but it's true. All you did was exactly what I expected you to."

"Did I?" Loki was shocked by the sudden flash of anger in Tony's voice. "So I can beat you into a pulp until I nearly kill you because that's what you expect me to do? That's who Tony Stark is to you is it?"

Loki didn't know how to answer. "I'm sorry," he said finally.

Tony brought one hand up to cover his eyes, his face wrinkled with an expression Loki didn't understand. "You're sorry?"

"Yes, I'm sorry Tony, the spell wasn't working, I had to try, it was the only thing I could think of."

Tony looked despairing. Loki wanted more than anything in the world to reach out and hold him, to pull him close and tell him he would be okay, just like Tony had done for Loki so many times. But he held himself back. Whatever connection there might have been between them, he had ruined it, compelled by the oath, for which he was also solely responsible.

"And it didn't work."

"Yes, Bambi, I'm aware of that. Here we are, the world's about to end from some magical threat and the only the plan we have to prevent it is, what, for me to keep hurting you? Perhaps I can try actually beating you unconscious, see if that does the trick?"

"There is another way. Take me back to Strange."

"No."

Loki gazed at him, confused. "Why not?"

"Look Lokes, I may not be perfect, if that was ever in doubt I think I've proved that now, but I won't send you back to him. He'll keep going until he kills you, happily, no tricks required."

"Then what?" Loki asked quietly.

"What other choice is there? We just have to keep going, we have to find a way to make the spell work, a way that doesn't end up with you dead."

"I'm not sure there is such a way, Tony."

Tony ignored this. Shaking his head, he forced a brightness into his voice. "How are you feeling?"

Loki shrugged.

"Will you have dinner with me?"

Loki wasn't expecting that. Nor was he expecting the weird little flip in his stomach as he looked up at Tony's hopeful face.

“Yes, Tony, of course I will.”

## Chapter 12

They had just had dinner. Tony hadn't asked, but Loki had quickly dressed in one of his "waiter" outfits for the occasion. Tony hadn't made Loki do any service though. He had ordered takeaway and even set out the plates and unpackaged the boxed himself. Loki also noted the absence of any type of alcohol from the table.

Loki realised Tony was trying to be kind, but not having the opportunity to serve had taken away even the most menial of relief from the pain of the oath shooting through his body. His very bones ached with it and his skin was buzzing, as if with electricity. He could feel blisters forming lightly down his arms. That didn't usually happen unless he was directly contradicting an order, not just because he was being too slow. He pulled on his sleeves nervously and tried not to let Tony notice.

They had made polite conversation through the meal. Loki got the sense Tony was nervous to talk to him, as if he thought Loki might not want to be there. In fact, Loki was delighted to have company after the days of painful isolation and he tried his best to put Tony at ease. Tony mainly looked down at his dinner, and valiantly tried to make conversation like the past few days hadn't happened, but each time his eyes flicked up to the cuts and bruises littering Loki's face he fell quiet.

"If you have had enough to eat, Tony," Loki said eventually, "perhaps we could have another go at the spell?"

"Sure Bambi, whatever you say," Tony sighed, looking at him with sad eyes.

"I'm sorry, Tony, I know you never asked for this. Believe me, I appreciate it. It is my hope that we will complete the spell soon and then I will no longer be a burden on you."

"That's your hope is it?"

Loki looked at Tony confused, but he couldn't read his expression.

"Yes, Tony."

"Yeah, that's understandable, I mean of course."

Tony somehow looked even sadder, like he had been hoping for another answer. He brought a hand up to cup Loki's face, delicately trying to avoid pressing on his injuries. It was the first time Tony had touched him since he had left him bloodied on the floor and Loki leaned into it, hungry for the physical contact. Tony seemed hesitant, like he didn't want to push his luck. Loki leaned forward and drew him into a long kiss.

"C'mon then," Tony said, pulling away and making it clear that Loki should walk with him rather than crawl by holding his hand out for Loki to take. Tony led the way upstairs, into his bedroom. Loki hadn't been here except to instruct Tony on the runes that emblazoned the walls and he paused a moment to take in the vast, sparse room and the centrepiece bed that looked like it was designed to sleep 6. Perhaps it was.

The runes were glowing a very dull orange, flickering slightly like candlelight. Getting Tony to agree to try out the spell again had eased Loki's skin slightly. He couldn't know for sure under his shirt, but he thought the blisters had subsided. There was no noticeable difference to the pain.

"Shall I fetch anything, sir? Anything you might like to use?"

Tony looked straight into his eyes and instead of answering pushed him firmly backwards onto the bed, diving on top of him, pinning his arms down as he kissed him. Loki kissed him back fervently, trying to push away the pain sparking across his body by sheer force of will. Tony ran his hands over him, ripping off Loki's "uniform" and trailing his warm tongue down cool skin, their bodies rubbing together. Loki shivered as Tony licked a stripe along his cock and took it into his mouth.

It felt amazing, but it was doing absolutely nothing for the pain. Not quite suffering enough to stop it, Loki did the next best thing and reached out his own hands towards Tony, unzipping his pants and sliding his hand inside. Tony took the hint and shifted position so that Loki could take his cock into his mouth too. It only took the slightest edge off the pulsing pain of the oath, but it gave Loki something extra to think about and he tried to focus his energy on putting in his absolute best performance.

He let Tony's thick cock slip into his throat as he swirled his tongue enthusiastically along his shaft. Tony groaned, sending delicious vibrations along Loki's own length. The pain mixed together with the pleasure of Tony's mouth around him. Joy at having the weight of Tony's body on top of him surged through him, a closeness Loki had assumed they would never have again. It was an overwhelming and intoxicating combination. Tony seemed to feel it too, because it wasn't long before he spilled into Loki and they collapsed next to each other on the bed.

After a minute or two Loki made to stand up, but Tony quickly laid an arm across his chest.

"Stay here... if you'd like to?"

It was a question, not an order, but Loki didn't need to be asked twice and he leaned back into Tony's welcoming embrace.

Tony was asleep almost immediately, but Loki lay, eyes open, staring at the fading embers of the runes on the wall. What did it all mean? Tony had seemed sad when Loki mentioned completing the spell – he would be sad to lose his servant, his concubine, that made sense he supposed. But Stark was the richest man in Midgard, he could have any servants money could buy, for any purposes. Perhaps, even though he had been hesitant at first, he was growing to enjoy punishing Loki for his crimes against Stark's home world. That also made sense. But why then had he brought Loki into his bedroom and, when Loki had willingly offered Stark the opportunity to torture him, chosen instead to kiss him, suck his cock then cuddle up with him? Midgard really was a strange place, or perhaps Stark was just a strange man. His mind muddled by the pain that pulsed through his body, it was all too much for him to understand.

He nestled into Tony's side. Despite the pain, the warmth of Tony's body and the arm casually thrown over him was comforting. Loki closed his eyes and tried to forget about all of it, about the oath, about Thor's bargain, about the trick he himself was playing. He went back to one of his fantasies from his time in prison, where he had imagined being with Tony, but this time his mind didn't jump immediately to rough, passionate sex. He imagined Tony's gentle fingers on his face, his warm smile when Loki said something funny, the concern in his eyes when he thought Loki wasn't looking, his soft words telling Loki how beautiful he looked. Tears sprung into Loki's eyes and even he didn't know if it was the pain on his skin causing them. He leaned back into Tony, pulling the arm tight around himself as the pain burned through him.

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Tony woke up to the sight of Loki writhing on the floor, his skin blisters on top of blisters. Loki was screaming in agony into his clenched teeth. He had never felt pain like this. How he was conscious still, he couldn't understand. Tony look on in horror.

“What is it? Tell me? What’s making this happen?”

Loki tried to form words, but his tongue had swelled up in his mouth and all he could do was gasp for air, his eyes wild, his arms flailing in an attempt to make Tony understand.

“I don’t get it, you’re not hurting anyone, you’re not trying to do magic. Are you disobeying his orders somehow?”

Loki nodded his head frantically and choked out a muffled sound that must have meant yes.

“What orders?” Tony asked desperately, but Loki couldn’t respond, his eyes wide with panic.

“Get me Strange!” Tony yelled into the air. Friday connected him immediately.

“What is it Stark?” came Stephen’s cool voice on the end of the line.

“What are you doing to Loki? Get here and stop it. Right now! Friday, let him in.”

“Cool, it Aladdin,” said Strange, the direction of his voice shifting as he stepped through a hastily appearing portal and into the penthouse, “your wish is my command.”

Turning to Loki, he spoke calmly, as if oblivious to his thrashing and choking on the floor. “That will do, you can stop trying now.”

The blisters melted away and Loki was left spread-eagled, gasping like a drowning man pulled from the ocean.

Tony wasn’t satisfied.

“Stop trying what?” he demanded.

“Stop trying to make you complete the spell, clearly you’re inadequate. I didn’t want to do this but time is against us, I’m going to have to move to plan B.”

“Oh yeah, and what’s that?”

“I’m going to have to reach into the dark dimension and use its power to defeat his magic with my own.”

“What’s that going to do to him?”

“I can’t be sure,” said Stephen, unaffected, “but I assume it will kill him.”

Before Tony had a chance to respond, power flared like a tornado. Tony was flung back across the room as a halo of orange encircled Stephen and Loki. Stephen’s eyes blacked over and purple light began to flow from them, pinning Loki to the ground.

“Loki, stop him!” Tony yelled, but his voice was lost in the cacophony, and he knew it wouldn’t make any difference. Loki couldn’t use magic, and he couldn’t even defend himself with his fists. Tony had made Loki swear to hurt no one, even Strange.

Loki’s eyes met Tony’s across the room, his lips moved, heavy as if with great effort. Tony couldn’t understand what he was trying to communicate, but the searing pain as the magic drained from his body was clear across his face. He had seen Loki in pain before, but this was something else, a whole new level of torment.

Tony didn't hesitate. Thrusting his arm into the air, the Iron Man suit encased his body as he flung himself into the path of the purple light.

Tony knew it was hopeless. He knew Strange could simply reverse time, anticipate his attack and incapacitate him before the thought had even crossed Tony's mind, but he didn't care. All he wanted to do was put himself between Strange and that desperate pain in Loki's eyes.

The purple stream of energy crashed into Tony's suit, sending the displays haywire. The power was drained in an instant and the suit thudded dead to the floor. Breathless at Loki's feet, Tony squinted up at Strange, expecting him to re-ignite the purple light and finish his work. But Strange was gawping open-mouthed at Loki. Green light was radiating off him, crackling off the runes littered around the penthouse, getting so bright it was unbearable. Both Tony and Stephen squeezed their eyes shut. The bubble seemed to burst, but the energy remained, the very air vibrating with it.

Tony flipped back his visor and aching slowly sat up. He felt like he's just gone three rounds with the Hulk. He must have some broken ribs at least.

Strange was gone.

Loki looked exhausted, but elated, a slight glow about his skin. He stood up.

"It's done," he said simply.

"Huh?" was all Tony had the energy to grunt.

"It's done, the shield is made. Thor will presumably miraculously complete his quest momentarily and return to Asgard with Odin. And when that happens, ah yes," and with a flick of his fingers that sent firework like sparks shooting across the room, "I will be free to use my powers."

"W-what, what happened?" Tony managed, his voice hoarse. "I thought he was going to kill you."

"He would have done, had you not intervened. I want to finally see this protection spell for myself, but I strongly suspect "submission" was a further incorrect translation. On the available evidence, I would say that the correct translation is "sacrifice". Specifically your sacrifice, throwing yourself directly into the path of dark dimension energy to save me. Strange's way was never going to work. Me sacrificing control to you, or him, or whoever, was never going to be a great enough sacrifice to make the spell stick. It took you as the source mage, your willingness to sacrifice yourself to finally complete the spell."

"Mage? I'm no wizard."

"Are you not? You possess in your body the most advanced energy source on this realm, one of your own creation. Midgard still sees a distinction between "magic" and "science". On Asgard we lost such archaic notions centuries ago. What is your "science" but the magic of the universe harnessed to your own purposes?"

Tony didn't try to argue. Dropping his eyes, he seemed to want to ask something more, but the words stuck in his throat. Loki didn't need to hear it.

"You're right. You asked the question yourself, just moments after we arrived here. You asked if escaping and flying half the way around the world was included in "doing what Strange told me to". I said that he hadn't told me not to. While true, in fact it was a bit more than that. Strange told me you would likely attempt a rescue and that when you came I must go with you. I must convince you to complete the ritual. Believe me, I was worried he had set me an impossible task. That he had doomed me to an eternity in Hel, given the look of disgust you had for me when you saw the

state of my body in the throne room.”

“I, uh...” Tony looked like he wanted to inject here, but Loki continued.

“So I had to convince you, you understand. I had no choice. But it wasn’t working, and the longer we failed the more the oath pushed me, until my failure overwhelmed me and you were forced to call Strange.”

“So, it was all another lie?” said Tony, his voice heavy. “We weren’t two equally unwilling people in a crappy situation trying to save the world. You were still no more than a slave, and I was no better than a... a...” The words died on his lips.

“No,” said Loki, voice calm in the still gently vibrating air. “You were not to know. Tony Stark you have been kind to me where no other has been these past years. You believed you were doing something noble, and you believed you were helping me. I lied to you and encouraged you. I manipulated you into doing things you never wanted to. You have nothing to be remorseful for. Once again you are the hero of Midgard.”

He laid one hand on Tony’s shoulder and, like Tony had done so many times to him, placed his fingers gently under Tony’s chin and lifted his head so their eyes met. Tony hesitated, but Loki leaned in pressing their lips together, a final kiss.

“Now I must fulfil my oath to you, Tony Stark and leave this world unharmed. Farewell.”

“Loki... I...”

But he was already gone.

## Epilogue

Tony sat for a long time, gazing blankly at the spot where Loki had been. He had once been a feared adversary, then a reluctant victim, then Tony thought there had been something, if not true friendship, at least understanding, mutual kindness and respect. But that had been a lie. He knew Loki had been bound by his oath, did this further layer of compulsion really make a difference? Was he kidding himself, thinking that despite the oath the two of them could somehow have been a partnership, working together to get out of an awful situation.

His thoughts took a darker turn. Deep down, surely he knew that Strange wouldn't have let his prey get away so easily? Had he blinded himself to the truth because he was enjoying himself? Did he even enjoy it all the more, knowing Loki was participating against his will?

Tony second guessed himself until he truly had no idea any more what he had believed and when.

The first fingers of dawn were peaking through the penthouse windows when he finally fell into a restless sleep, not waking until late into the afternoon. When he did, he wished he hadn't. Everything was as he'd left it, the penthouse too still, too silent.

"Coffee, Friday," he sighed and decided to carry on. "And find someone to clean up these damn swiggles everywhere!"

The next few weeks Tony stayed up late into the night tinkering in the workshop, ordering take out, sleeping well into the next day and repeating, but he couldn't shake the feeling of melancholy. Life seemed to have lost its colour.

He even started to think maybe he was going mad. He had begun to see things out of the corner of his eye, shadows and movements that when he turned were gone. Once the door to the laboratory was open, letting in a draft, when he swore he had closed it behind him. Another time the motion sensor lighting triggered on the far side of the lounge while Tony was watching another re-run on TV, but Friday couldn't explain what had triggered it.

Tony was just ending his nightly routine of drinking too much and falling asleep among his takeaway boxes, when an empty beer bottle slipping off the bar counter and smashed, jolting him away.

"Friday?" he asked urgently. "Has somebody got in here?"

"There has been no unauthorised entry recorded on any doors or windows, sir."

Tony got to his feet and paced slowly over to the smashed bottle. Crossing around to the other side of the bar, nothing else looked out of place... but he wondered...

"Loki?" he whispered, as if saying it quietly would make his forlorn hope less obvious. For a moment nothing changed, then with a shimmer of green sparks Loki himself materialised, crouched behind the bar, just as they had once hid together from Strange's fireworks.

"Loki?!" Tony repeated, shocked. "You're... here? You've been ... watching me?"

Loki flushed.

"I'm sorry, I can explain!" he began, but Tony cut him off, crouching down and grasping his hands in his own.

“Why would you come back here?” he whispered, gazing into Loki’s eyes. “If you’re looking for revenge, I don’t blame you.”

“No!” Loki blushed even harder.

“I... I missed you Tony. You are right that I had no choice about my actions when last we where here, and you in your turn were only doing what you felt was necessary, because of my lies. But I want you to know that I wish that things had been different, that the time we shared together had been genuine. I wanted to check you were well. But instead I found you miserable. I didn’t know what to do, so I returned again, and again. I shouldn’t have done it, you have had enough pain from my deceptions, but somehow I couldn’t help myself. I’m sorry, I won’t trouble you again.”

Loki scanned Tony’s face, looking for anger, betrayal, contempt, but he saw only plain, simple, joy.

“You are pleased to see me here?”

“Pleased? I’m delighted! Overjoyed! Enthralled! Enchanted! Well, maybe scratch that last one. But yes I’m fucking pleased to see you. I thought you couldn’t come back here, your oath, you promised to leave Earth?”

Loki smiled, the warmest, most genuine smile that made Tony’s stomach flip over.

“I swore an oath to you that I would leave this place and its inhabitants unharmed. I never promised that I wouldn’t come back.”

A smile spread over Tony’s lips too as he brought them in close to Loki’s.

“Can I kiss you now?” he asked.

“Yes, Tony, of my own free will, absolutely, totally and completely, yes.”

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